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ABSTRACT

A day care program director designed and implemented a practicum to improve the skills of day care teachers who were not effectively fostering language development in their classrooms. Classroom observations revealed that children attending the centers seldom asked or answered questions, used few complex sentences, and only rarely used language playfully. Although teachers usually responded to children's needs for attention and information, the language they directed to children was characterized by a large number of commands. Virtually no use of such techniques as extention and expansions was found. Practicum goals were to identify, develop, and implement program activities and practices that improved the over-all quality of the language environment. Intervention efforts focused on promoting language-enriched experiences for children, on-site support to teachers, recording of teacher-child conversations, and group learning activities for teachers. At the end of the intervention, classroom discourse had improved significantly, but teachers' use of nurturing language improved only slightly. The use of enriched activities that stimulate language increased. All teachers at the end of the practicum showed evidence of a greater capacity to integrate and apply the knowledge and skills that support a positive language environment. Fifty references are cited and related materials are appended, including instruments, data, and forms for teachers. (RH)

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Center for the Advancement of Education
Ed.D. Program

IMPROVING THE LANGUAGE OF DAY CARE TEACHERS THROUGH ON-SITE SUPPORT

by

Eleanor Barry
Cluster XX

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IMPROVING THE LANGUAGE OF DAY CARE TEACHERS THROUGH ON-SITE SUPPORT

by

Eleanor Barry
Cluster XX

A Practicum Report Presented to the Ed.D. Program
in Early and Middle Childhood
in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements
for the Degree of Doctor of Education

NOVA UNIVERSITY
1990

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PRACTICUM APPROVAL SHEET

This practicum took place as described.

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This practicum report was submitted by Eleanor C. Barry under the direction of the adviser listed below. It was submitted to the Ed.D. Program in Early and Middle Childhood and approved in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Education at Nova University.

Approved:

Feb. 2, 1990
Date of Final Approval of Report

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ABSTRACT

The Language of Day Care Teachers: Improvement through On-Site Support. Barry, Eleanor C., 1990: Practicum Report, Nova University Ed. D. Program in Early Childhood.
Descriptors: Communication/Discourse/Language Arts/ Language Development/Paraprofessionals/Preschool Curriculum/Teacher Education/Teacher Effectiveness.

Day Care teachers often lack an understanding of the elements that create a language-rich environment. This practicum addressed the problem of Day Care teachers who were not effectively fostering language development in their classrooms.

The goals of the practicum were to identify, develop and implement program activities and practices that improved the over-all quality of the language environment. The writer built a variety of techniques into a program of on-site support to enhance teacher verbalizations and increase enriched, shared activities. The writer worked with the Day Care teachers, individually and in group sessions, using selected strategies to meet their learning needs.

At the end of the practicum classroom discourse had improved significantly, but teachers' nurturing language improved only slightly. The use of enriched activities that stimulate language increased. All teachers at the end of the practicum showed evidence of a greater capacity to integrate and apply the knowledge and skills that support a positive language environment.

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Description of Community

For almost twenty years the Board of Education of this heavily industrialized city has sponsored a day care program as part of its mission to provide early education for the inner city child. The city is located at the headwater of a river formed by the confluence of two other rivers. Bridges span the rivers, and the rivers are busy with barges and tugboats transporting coal and coke, sand and gravel, oil and chemicals - materials needed by the mills operating on the river banks. Small houses, crowded close together, cluster near the mills along narrow streets built up high into the hillsides. It is a city of bridges and tunnels, of steep hills and deep valleys, a city of pleasing vistas. But, the terrain divides the city into small, isolated, cohesive, ethnic neighborhoods, each distinctive with traditions and customs of its own.

The population has declined in the last twenty-five years owing to changing markets and economic instability, and there are fewer and fewer job opportunities in the mills for those with limited skills. The economy is no longer based on heavy industry. High tech and computer firms are replacing heavy industry, and white

collar workers now outnumber blue collar workers. Since there are no longer jobs for the unskilled and semi-skilled many men are unemployed or under-employed, resulting in the patent need for day care services as wives, who are mothers of small children, seek employment or enroll in training courses.

The day care centers under the auspices of the Board of Education are located in the poverty areas of the city, often blighted neighborhoods, characterized by social pathology. Each of the day care centers is administratively attached to a school in a neighborhood where at least thirteen percent of the population is living in poverty. Although there is not a strong educational tradition in these neighborhoods, many residents look to the school as an agent of change. A good number of neighborhood people found work in the schools as para-professionals when such programs as Head Start and Day Care got under way. When originally hired the staff of the day care program lived in the very neighborhoods where they worked. They held many of the same values and beliefs as the parents of the children they were working with and usually understood the parents' difficulties and struggles. They were proud to be participating in this educational enterprise, although they were sometimes puzzled by the methods and materials used in the education of the pre-school child.

The day care classrooms are typical public school classrooms: twenty-five feet by thirty-two feet, painted light green or pale lemon, with a bank of windows along one wall, blackboards or greenboards at the front or side and lavatories down the hall. They are furnished with sturdy, well-worn, but nevertheless, attractive child-sized furniture arranged to suggest and invite play. There is an array of materials, available and accessible, to the children:

books to browse among,
paints and crayons to experiment
with color and form,
blocks to build with
and in the dramatic play area an
assortment of dress-up clothes.

Owing to severe funding constraints, the day care program has been staffed since 1973 by paraprofessionals who meet the educational requirements set by the State Department of Public Welfare. Group Leaders (Day Care Teachers) have Associate Degrees, or the equivalent, and have specialized training in early childhood education and child development. The Assistant Group Leaders (Assistant Teachers) have at least three years experience in child care and 18 credits or more in appropriate college level courses. All but three of this group (teachers and assistant teachers) have worked in the day care program for more than ten years. There have been on-going oppor-

tunities for the staff to deepen and broaden their knowledge about children and programming, since in-service training has been built into the program year after year. Currently, the teachers are working toward earning the Child Development Associate credential.

The program has benefited from the low turn-over of staff, but there is a nagging concern that there are detriments too: a loss of energy, a lack of resiliency, a resistence to change. Is wisdom always gleaned from experience, and if so, does it off-set the effects of aging?

Author's Work Setting and Role

At the time of project initiation, the author was the director of the program. She administered the budget, managed the records and reports and supervised the staff of twenty-three full-time employees and twenty part-time employees. She was assisted by a social worker and two secretaries. She reported to the Director of the Division of Early Childhood Education. This division includes Head Start, a pilot Child Development program, Kindergartens and the Early Learning Skills classrooms. The pre-school programs support each other's efforts, share resources to their mutual benefit and are striving toward an "equity of excellence." An important goal is to articulate with the Kindergarten program and effect a developmental continum.

CHAPTER II

STUDY OF THE PROBLEM

Problem Description

The staff is hard working and troubled when the children do not develop in accord with their expectations. One area causing them concern is the children's poor speech and limited language. Observation, studies and informal testing indicate that some children do require the skilled assistance of a speech therapist. Such a child is Walter*, a sturdy four year old:

> Walter is at the water table. He calls to the foster Grandparent and points to the picture on the wall of four stick figures indicating that no more than four children are to be at the water table at one time. He counts, "One, two, three, four." His speech is unclear, but Grandma replies, "That's right, four children. Walter points to one of the stick figures and says, "Mine." He says something that cannot be understood. Grandma tells Walter, "Talk slow, everybody is listening." Walter tries; he seems to be stuck on a word. He is visibly upset. He stands with his mouth open and his eyes wide. Grandma encourages, "I'm listening, go slow." He finally says, "A boat," and Grandma interprets, "Oh you mean you have a boat."

Grandma is well meaning, but Walter may experience her urging him "to talk slow" as pressure.

In the very same class is Lionel, three and a half, a comparative newcomer, still learning the folkways of the classroom:

*All names are code names.

He greets the teacher, "Hey, you," and darts over to the housekeeping area and begins to arrange and re-arrange a pile of dishes, singing (a string of nonsense words) at the top of his lungs. The teacher points out the fruit in the basket on the table. He calls out "Fruit!" and picks up a lemon and places it on a plate. The teacher lingers a moment, but when she leaves, Lionel puts the lemon back in the basket and resumes shuffling the dishes, singing his song. Catching sight of his classmates assembling in the block corner in preparation for going outdoors, he dashes over to the group, but on the way wrestles with two boys. The teacher separates him from them, and he carols, "Let's set the taa-ble."

The teacher directs him to go to the bathroom with Christopher. Lionel asks, "Just me?" "No, both of you." Lionel tugs on the straps of his overalls and says, "Hey." The teacher frowns: "What do you want and who is 'Hey'?" Lionel runs over to the Assistant Teacher, "Hey woman, fix this!" She readily unfastens the strap and asks, "What's my name?"

Lionel: What's my name?
Assistant: What is your name?
Lionel (smiling sweetly) Lionel!
Assistant: And my name is Mrs. Neeley.

Lionel demonstrates a knowledge of syntax and semantics and is working on the pragmatics. He will soon learn the appropriate language to use in various contexts.

Four year old Brent, also a member of this class, uses language with ease and competency. One morning while playing at the water table with Cameron and Leon, he comments to the teacher as she passes by:

They're using those (the small cups) because they're little. I'm not.
Cameron: I'm not your friend (because) you said that.
Brent: You're getting bigger. Look Cameron. That's funny. (He squirts water from a

bottle.) Here's a ghost. Right here. (He points to the arc of water.)

Cameron: O babe. O yeah

Brent: Look at this, Cameron. (The stream of water he is squirting from his bottle.)

Leon: Here's a ghost. O burry.

Brent: Look Cameron. Look Lee. (Points to the spray of water.)
I need more (water). But I'm done. Bay, Bay. Look at all these bubbles. (Swirling the water around.) I'm done, but I'll wait for you, Cameron. (Chants) O yeah, Bay, bay. O yeah.

Cameron: O yeah.
Leon and Cameron begin to tussle over a pitcher.

Brent: Oh we share. Bay, bay. We share. O yeah.

But many of the children are not as facile in their use of language as Brent. Many have difficulty expressing their needs and wishes. They seldom answer questions or ask questions. They use few complex sentences. Rarely is there any playful use of language.

A Speech and Language Survey completed by the Day Care Teachers showed that there were a variety of problems that warranted attention.

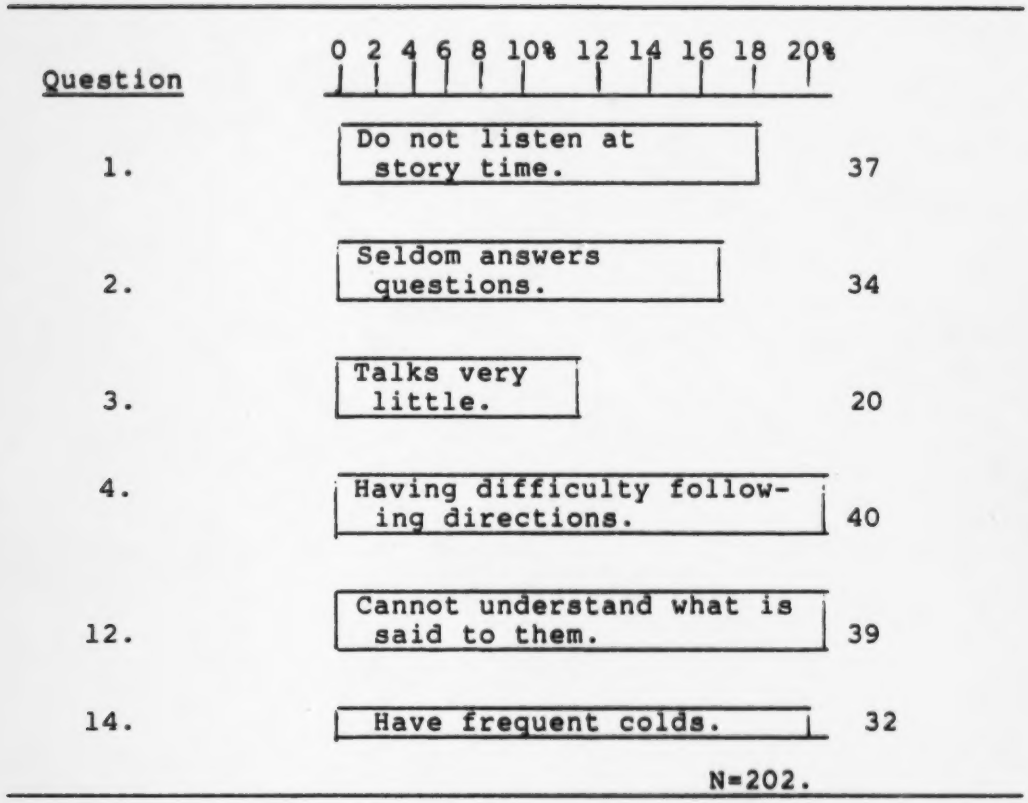


Figure 1. Percentages of day care children having problems in six significant speech and language areas. (See Appendix A and B).

Problem Documentation

Three observations of each of the ten day care teachers were made during free play. These specimen records were analyzed for types of verbal behaviors. The findings showed that although teachers usually respond to children's needs for attention and information, the language directed to children is characterized by a large number of commands. Even though teachers supply the children with many bits of information all through the day - Some new fire engines are yellow; broken crayons can still be used (to draw) - they miss many opportunities to develop meaning and content. There is virtually no use of techniques such as expansions and extention. Teachers ask many questions but a good number of these are really directives in question-form. The language exchanges between teacher and child are brief, almost curt:

*Donnie: Where was I yesterday? (When the group walked to the firehouse).
Teacher: You were home.
Donnie: What was I doing?
Teacher: I don't know.
Maybe playing.
(Donnie continues drawing, the teacher moves away to arrange the puzzles in the rack.)

*Shane points to a picture showing just heads and shoulders of children at the beach: Do they have feets?
Teacher: Yes.

In these two examples, the teachers lack the ability or willingness to engage in extended conversations with the children.

But children do talk freely; teachers sometimes ask them to lower their voices: "Use your inside voice," is a favorite reminder, and sometimes children are urged to "Be nice" when they begin to rough-house. While the climate is benign, it is not very stimulating.

In contrast, observations of four teachers in another day care program sponsored by a settlement house put the short-comings of the Board of Education day care teachers into sharp relief. As a group the settlement house teachers use many more language exchanges which develop content, challenge children to consider alternatives, to play with ideas:

> Teacher to children helping with lunch preparation. Some people have green pudding. What color is that? (Pointing to a bowl of lime jello).
> Child 1: Pistachio.
> Teacher: Wow! Name some other colors.
> Child 2: Lello?
> Teacher: Yellow? Yellow jello. Yes.
> Child 3: Red. No! Rasberry!
> Teacher: I think you're fooling me. That's a flavor, a taste. But-hey-wait-could be a color too.
> Child 2: Blue?
> Teacher: Blue jello. Hmm. What would that taste like?
> Child 1: Blueberry.
> Teacher: Blueberry, yes. Yum, yum.

These teachers describe what happened and help children to understand:

> A chair falls over with a child sitting in it. The teacher, nearby, rushes over to him, picks him up and sits him in her lap: Oooh. Oh. Oh. You were pushing yourself back and the chair flopped. It fell. Pretty scary. M (the lead teacher) saw you and was coming to help you. Are you ok?

They ask questions, give explanations and help children gather together pieces of information:

Teacher with a group of children rolling and cutting play dough: There was a mouse in your house?
Child: Two mouses. And a cat. She ate them.
(Flurry of excitement among the children). She did. The cat.
Teacher: Why do you think the cat ate the mice?
Child: They were bad.
Teacher: Perhaps you thought they were bad, but I think the cat thought they were food. What else do cats like to do?
(Children begin banging knives.)
Can you use your knife to cut the dough? Oh, fine! You're cutting many, many .....
We were talking about cats eating mice. Cats, they also like to eat something that flies. Can you think what?
Children: (In a chorus). Birds! Birds!
Teacher: (Nods) They also like to eat something that swims.
(Silence).
Think what swims?
(Children look at each other and shrug).
Could it be fish?
Children: Yes, yes. Fish!
Teacher: Cats eat mice and (waits)
Children: Fish!
Teacher: and....
Children: Birds!

When the verbal behaviors of both groups are compared (see Figure 2), it is clear that both groups of teachers consider:

1. responding to children's bids,
2. providing children with information to make sense of their worlds,
3. and asking questions to stimulate their thinking,

essential to teaching young children. These three aspects for both groups are most important. The disparities between the two groups are informative. Most striking is the fact that the Board of Education day care teachers use many more directives and commands (21% as opposed to 9%) and develop content much less (1% as compared to 12%) - suggesting that their language environments are more negative and less vital as settings for learning. Another difference that is of significance is the difference in the average total number of verbal interaction: for the settlement house day care teachers their average total number of verbal interactions is 41, for the Board of Education 24. The research (Barnes, S., Gutfreund, M., Satterly, D. & Wells, G., 1983) indicates that the greater the teacher-child verbal interactions, the greater the gains in language development.

There is a need for the Board of Education day care teachers to refine and expand their verbal interactions in order to enhance the quality of the language environment. There is a complementary need for the teachers to provide first hand experiences as a framework for language learning.

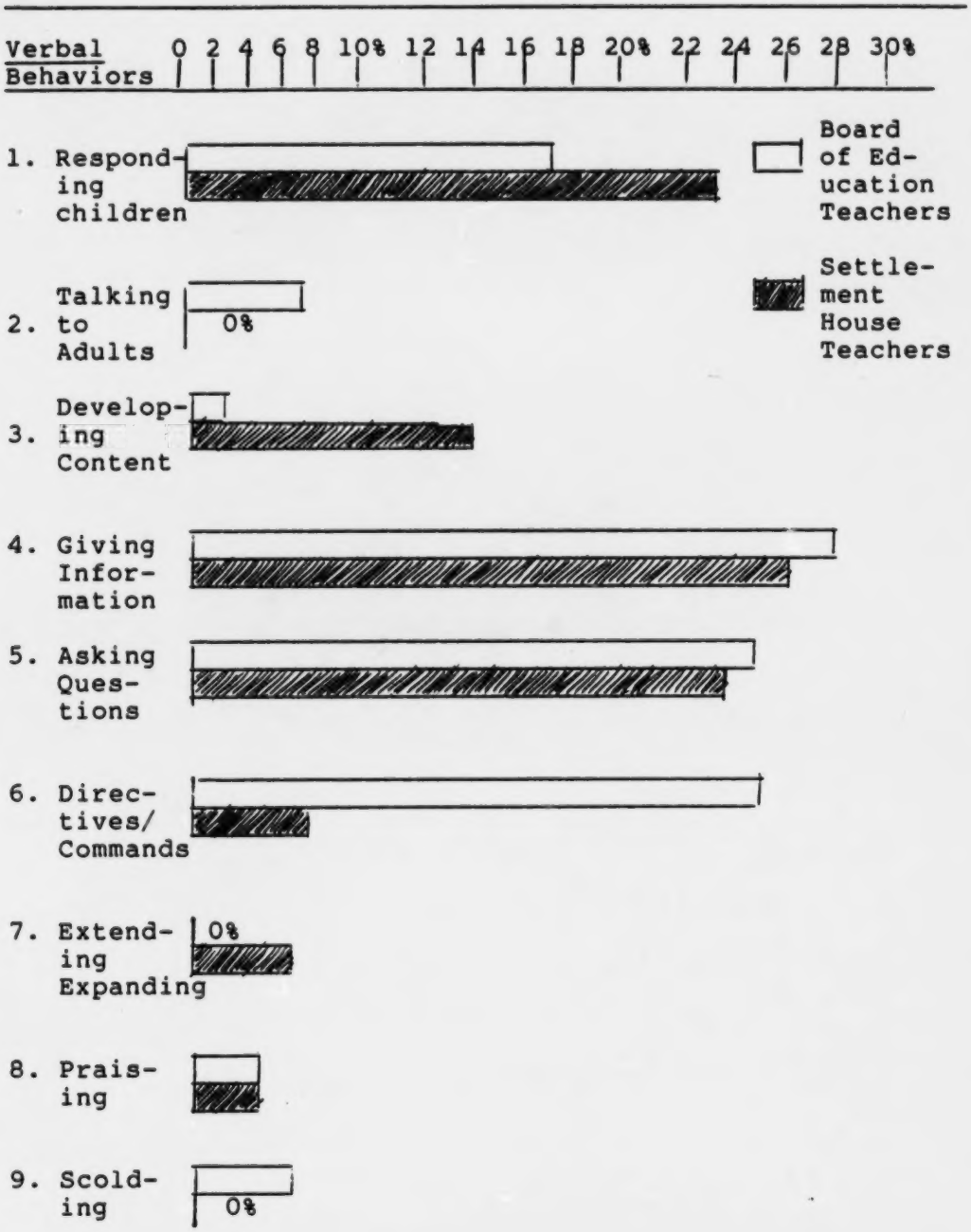


Figure 2. Percentages of certain verbal behaviors used by Board of Education day care teachers compared with day care teachers in a settlement house.

Analysis of Causes

The perception of themselves as teachers affects the enactment of their teaching role and is probably central to the problem of the improverished language environment of the day care classroom. The teachers do not see themselves as continual learners, as persons who design and redesign the curriculum to fit the needs of individual children. They see themselves as teachers who instruct, who tell children what to do and how to do it, their main job being to keep children safe and occupied. They clamor for a written curriculum replete with detailed activities, yet yearn for autonomy. And at the same time they resist the invitation to be decision-makers or innovators. Their focus is narrow. Brainstorming about ways to enrich their classrooms yielded meager suggestions; more toys, added staff. They do not see themselves as resources to the children, as persons with talents and experiences that could be shared for the mutual benefit of themselves and the children.

Caregiving and the responsibility of being the teacher with group responsibility causes stress. Indeed, many of the methods of the informal classroom cause stress; the diversity of the work, the sharing of responsibility with others, the preparation of materials, the endless demands to plan, to observe, to record and evaluate, to guide children to new learnings,

to encourage free choice and be mindful of children's discourse and their own interactions, verbal and non-verbal. (Taylor, 1972). The day care teachers are usually uncomfortable with the role of the teacher as an active participant in the children's learning. They are more at home with telling and explaining as the children grouped around them listen.

Key to the problem is that the current day care teachers do not have a professional orientation to their jobs. The majority were employed fifteen years or more ago when teacher aides were first added to classrooms to assist teachers in non-teaching tasks. They earned the requisite credits to be assigned to Head Start and Day Care classrooms by taking courses offered and paid for by the Office of Economic Opportunity and the Office of Children and Youth of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania. These college level courses, organized by the local colleges and universities, were presented on site during the course of the working day. With few exceptions their professional sights were set no higher than earning the credits necessary to qualify for the particular job. Certainly they like little children and were proud to be part of the educational enterprise and were confident that their accumulated knowledge as mothers or aunts was sufficient.

Table 1.

Education of Day Care Staff
N=40

Day Care Teachers	BA	0	
	3 Yrs. College	0	
	2 Yrs. College	2	Assoc. Degree 5
	30-40 Credits	1*	
	20 Credits	1**	Total 10
Assistant Teachers	15-18 Credits	9	
	9th Grade	1*	Total 10
Aides	High School	20	Total 20

*Grandfathered in, 1973.
**Waiver granted, 1975.

All day care teachers are currently involved in earning the Child Development Credential.

The teachers were not prepared for the expectation that to be effective teachers required on-going learning, an intellectual approach to children's problems of learning, a careful organization of space, things, time and relationships, and reflection upon classroom experiences as a basis for further planning.

Table 2

Experience of Day Care Staff

Total Staff (Teachers, Assistants, Aides. N=40)	Day Care Teachers N=10
1-4 Years	6	1
5-9 Years	10	1
10-14 Years	10	0
15-19 Years	11	5
20+ Years	3	3

On the other hand, the teachers in the settlement house day care program chose to be teachers of young children and sought out a university program that prepared them to work with the preschool child. They have remained learners and are challenged by children's problems of learning and growing. "I am always listening to the underlying questions, not the words," relates N. "It's a conscious focus. The classroom happenings are clarified by a knowledge of child development. There's so much going on. It's so easy to squander your efforts. I think about it - I don't talk about it - (I) mesh (the experience) with the theoretical...."

Listen to what M says: "My relationship (to the children) begins with respect and from this premise the self-discovery experiences teach me. Whatever is happening in the here-and-now there's so much information to be gained - from the children to me, from me to the children. I respond spontaneously, blend affect with the verbal communication, but without a body of knowledge it's all trial and error. There are effective ways to help children and it's learned over time. And you will need to change. Find alternative ways. Experience. Study. Open-ness. All are needed."

Table 3
Settlement House Day Care Teachers

Age			Education			Experience		
Age			College	Assoc.				
20-29	30-39	40-49	Credit	Degree	BA	1-4y	5-9	10-14
2	1	1	1	2	1	2	1	1

Average Age: 34.7
N=4.

Both N and M seemed to be more introspective about their classroom experiences than the Board of Education teachers. N and M observe children carefully and respond thoughtfully to children's enthusiasms and needs. Both groups of teachers have similar goals for children's well-being, but their approaches are different. B, one of the Board of Education day care teachers explains her approach: "I want children to be more competent, more compassionate and happier children than they were... My method basically is a discovery type. I ... provide materials for children to use in their own individual way. I try not to assume anything about a given child and learn through observation and listening. But what I anticipated usually happens and I usually prepare."

And Ms. I from School 9 says, "I teach children (using) my own experiences. Also games and fun-learning; story, songs and dance. I try to make it as smooth as possible and to be pleasant, as pleasant as possible."

These teachers show interest and concern. They are striving to understand children in the context of the classroom. They are attentive and kind, and as children work and play the teachers expect and encourage children to talk to each other. But, when the give-and-take of free and easy conversation appears to be getting out-of-bounds teachers quickly intervene and curtail the activity. Teachers ask questions as a form of instruction, but

to have extended, spontaneous conversations with an individual child seems inappropriate, since the teacher's responsibility is to the group. At circle time there is conversation, but the teacher controls the topic and the turn-taking. Teachers simply may not know how to use their own language as a tool to facilitate children's language development. The paucity of the teachers' own language resources may be a salient factor. In their own growing and learning there may not have been many language-rich experiences.

Although both groups of teachers have similar goals for children's mastery and well-being, the Board of Education day care teachers seem to be more teacher-centered: children are expected to adapt to the teacher's plan rather than the plan being adjusted to support the child. (Taylor, 1972). Complicating the problem of teachers who tend to be directive and not self-critical - teacher-centered rather than learner-centered - is that these teachers are older as a group. And this brings with it certain professional and personnel problems. (Law, 1955).

Table 4

Age of Day Care Staff

Total Staff (Teachers, Assistants, Aides). N=40		Day Care Teachers N-10
20-29 years old	2	0
30-39	5	0
40-49	16	4
50+	17	6
Average Age: 50.6		Avg. Age: 53.8

Physical stamina is reduced and there is less resilience. With diminished energy there may be the temptation to fall back on familiar and more passive activities. These older teachers deplore the lack of recognition for seniority and experience and the emphasis on degrees. Salary increases or the prospect of promotion are not incentives for professional growth. Attitudes of complacency, resistence and even hostility emerge. New approaches to teaching and new insights about children may be difficult for them to accept. To change practice, to shift mental gears happens, but only slowly.

A speech pathologist who analyzed the protocals of the survey found that certain patterns emerged: teacher's unrealistic expectations, difficulties in communicating with children and a need for better knowledge of cognition and language development.

Indeed, a closer look at the classrooms reveals that, like the children, the teachers use a restricted linquistic code: few adverbs, adjectives or complex sentences. They rarely explain actions, name objects, or provide narratives describing what children are experiencing. Teachers' directions are terse, their comments sparse. A few examples of teacher-talk culled from a sample of observations highlight the level of their classroom discourse:

*Good morning! Want breakfast?
(Child walks toward table)

Want juice?
(Child nods.)

- A normal exchange: elliptical, functional.

*Moving swiftly toward three raucous boys playing Star Wars with logo blocks and scattering them with abandom:
Don't! Stop! You! Don't!

- The teacher's quick movements and loud tones convey the message. But, the boys also needed a re-statement of the classroom rules as a guide to action.

*The teacher is busy setting up for water play, and one child is already playing: "Roll your sleeves up." (-"so your sleeves don't get wet" is implied.) But the child may need the expanded statement.

The teacher turns to another child: "Put an apron on if you're going to play with water."

- This conditional statement may be too sophisticated for young children without futher explanation to clarify the meaning.

To Carl eager to join the others a teacher says, "I don't know about you in the water table. You have a bad cold. Will you get wet?"

Carl runs to get an apron: "I'll get wet! I'll get wet!"

- The teacher uses inferential speech, and Carl responds to the words but needs more help to understand the meaning of the teacher's language.

*At snack time the teacher is sitting with a small group of children. She hands one child an orange quarter, and says:
"Use a napkin."

"Sit down Dorian."

To the child next to her:
"More milk?"

Smiles at the child across the table from her:
"OK. You've had enough."

- The teacher is managing to meet the needs of several children. Her comments, if expanded, would add to the sociability of the situation and invite and encourage conversational give-and-take.

* Brandon to teacher:
"I'm going to McDonald's to get me a hamburg."
Teacher turns to Angel:
"Did you hear?"
To Brandon:
"Bring her a hamburger."

- The teacher responds to Brandon's pretend play and includes Angel but the extent of conversation is limited.

The teachers should be using language thoughtfully and enthusiastically. They should be listening, talking, rhyming, naming, conversing. Teachers should be helping children problem-solve by asking thought-provoking questions. They should provide enriching experiences for children to think about, talk about, paint about, dramatize or make-up stories about. Teachers should tell the children many stories and expect imaginative stories from them. Then not only would children become adept in using language for basic communication, but they also would be using language as a creative tool to enrich their thinking and experiences. The problem is that the day care teachers do not adequately foster oral

language. They are not purposefully nor consistently using shared experiences of the classroom to build in new vocabulary, supply information, and expand meaning. Typically, the teachers use a restricted language code rather than an elaborated language code.

The Related Literature

According to the writers in the field of early childhood education, the strengths of a good teacher include an ardent interest in children, high energy, a developed imagination and the ability to engage in extended conversations with children. (Rogers, Waller, Perrin, 1987). These conversations are characterized by their sensitivity to the child, their naturalness and spontaneity. The teacher listens to the child without interrupting, shares anecdotes and encourages the child to talk at length so that he (the child) can formulate ideas. By giving the child such opportunities, the teacher makes it possible for the child to build a clearer idea of his world.

In an ideal language environment where each child's language is recognized and valued, meaning-oriented conversations are a vehicle for language development, and shared activities provide the focus for talk. (Genishi & Dyson, 1984). The teacher asks questions and makes comments, but her primary concern is to maintain the flow of talk; her focus is on what the child says, not how he says it. "For all children, talk is a tool for understanding and becoming part of the world around him. For caregivers,

children's talk is a key for understanding children, for learning what interests them, for what worries them, and how and what children are learning." (p. 10).

Many make the assumption that the essential function of the adult's conversation is to model the language the child is to acquire, but a more significant function is an interactional one, where the adult partner of the dyad makes adjustments in her language to accommodate the child-learner... "providing scaffolding with which the child can construct progressively more functionally effective and elaborated communications." (Barnes, et al., 1988, p.70). Children need many opportunities to converse on topics of mutual interest with responsive adults whose input is neither too simple, nor too complex, whose ability to expand and extend the child's meaning is fine-tuned.

Justine Tenant and her colleagues Stuart McNaughton and Ted Glynn in their study Increasing Children's Language in Day Care through Caregiver Conversations (1988) emphasize that for an environment to foster language learning it is necessary to include a variety of play materials and activities, a low caregiver ratio, and most important of all there needs to be adults who provide responsive feedback. The researchers found that to promote language development it was not enough to enrich the environment (with extra toys, eg.), but it was crucial to train caregivers in language interaction skills. With training caregivers were able to improve the quality and quantity of the interactions with young children. Caregivers

learned to answer and ask questions and add extra information in conversations centering around child-selected topics. After training, conversations were longer and more frequent with children using new words and phrases. As conversations increased caregivers themselves learned more about children's language development and gathered more knowledge about the child and his special view of the world.

The teacher's role is vital in providing the conditions which enhance the language environment. She organizes the resources of the classroom in behalf of the children's learning; she is available to the questing child and aids him and responds to his need to know. When teachers help children clarify their ideas by using exploratory talk as a tool for learning, when both teacher and child collaborate to build meaning they (teachers) are making it possible for children to assimilate new knowledge. (Bayer, 1986; Watson & Young, 1986). However, the dominant, but ineffective pattern in the classroom, is a cycle in which the teacher initiates an exchange by asking a question, the child answers, the teacher reacts. The teacher's question is a memory question, the child's response is one or two words, the teacher's feedback may be approval or disapproval or she may add to the child's statement, substitute other terms or transform it. Since this I-R-F cycle (Initiate-Response-Feedback) does not usually result in real learning, "good teachers of the transmission kind" who "tell", who interpret new knowledge and make generalizations need to become "teachers of the interpretation

kind", teachers who use exploratory talk with children to help them shape their ideas. The frequency with which a teacher uses description and explanation in her classroom discourse, although a crude measure, typically indicates a teacher of the interpretation kind; one who is keenly aware and confident of the child's ability to be a participant in his own learning.

Teachers, like parents, need to adjust the level of their demands to the level of children's linquistic and communicative competence. "The way in which the teacher talks to young children helps to determine how active, how forthcoming and competent they may appear." (Wood & Wood, 1983 p. 160). Question after question, for example, will result in terse unelaborated talk, but a thoughtfully posed open-ended question helps the child explore his own thoughts. Even so, questions may not lead to extended thinking. The authors suggest another course of action to promote competence: namely, the use of explanations, generalizations, interpretations, hypotheses as well as recall, reason and labeling. They found that teachers could change their verbal styles, and they did change and improve, if they recorded their interactions.

The characteristics of adults' teaching language (parents and teachers) influence children's learning, particularly the development of literacy. Expectations are embedded in the language parents and teachers use. Their language communicates to the child whether he is deemed competent or incompetent. If the language transactions are negative (non-supportive,

directing, correcting, rejecting) the child's belief in himself is damaged, his ego is whittled away, and his learning diminished. But if the language used is enabling (encouraging, accepting, validating) the child's learning is enhanced. (Hoffman, 1987).

Researchers acknowledge the amazing accomplishment that the development of oral language represents. (Shapiro & Dorion, 1987). They point out that language develops in the social setting of the home without formal instruction out of a child's need to understand the world around him and communicate with the people significant to him. And in these proto-conversations the child is always an active participant. The adult assists the child to develop facility in language by playing simple games, by picture book reading, by retelling past events - all the while building a kind of 'scaffold' for gathering new information. The adult also assists by "modeling": the adult tells a story about what the child does, detailing and describing each step. The adult also provides the child with direct instruction: how to zip up his jacket, pour the juice, how to manage the every day activities. The adult provides the vocabulary for what the child does in any ordinary day. Parents encourage the child to explore his surroundings, to ask questions. The child is receptive, motivated and involved in the development of his oral language.

In the initial stages of language learning the way a mother talks to her child is modified: her speech is shorter, simpler,

slower, high pitched, more repetitive and gramatically better formed. In effect these modifications serve as language teaching devices because they stress the very features which the child has not yet mastered. (Howe, 1983). However, the child selects from the caregiver's input only those items that match his information storage and manipulation biases. Salience of the input as well as the complexity of it determine whether or not the child will attend to it. The language heard needs to be of at least moderate complexity. (Glertman, et al., 1984).

Language learning is a reflection of a child's individual rate of development, his interests, his uniqueness. He is an idiosyncratic word-learner, language user and meaning-maker. The foundation of his language learning is the experience he has had with people and objects. The greater the variety of activities a child is exposed to the richer his experiences, the broader his concepts, the more graphic and vivid his words. Words are learned as a by-product of experience, often in the context of a shared activity arranged by a teacher (or parent) and sustained by her talk. (Genishi, 1988). By three or four years of age, the child has developed an organizing strategy that helps him to categorize words into domains (eg., color words) which may be the first step in learning new words. The word-learning process is complex yet proceeds at a rapid rate. It can be facilitated by providing first hand experiences close to children's lives, talking about these experiences and using appropriate vocabularly to describe and explain them.

According to Tough (1974) children use language to achieve goals important to them. Language serves their purposes and fulfills certain functions in their social and cognitive development: the egocentric function is realized in the monologue, the socialized function in demands and requests. In a study of play and language, Monighan-Mouriot (1987) studied the changes observed in the social and cognitive complexity of play and imposed a developmental framework on the observation of children at play to see if there were parallel changes in spoken language. She coded the language for social categories (speech-to-self, collective monologue, socially-adapted speech) and for cognitive complexity (echolalia, monologue, roleplay speech, self-guiding speech). Her findings show that:

> the frequency of speech-to-self does not change with age.
>
> the way in which older and younger children use socially-adapted speech changes: three year olds discuss and negotiate taking turns with concrete objects; four and five year olds discuss and negotiate shared play themes and roles.
>
> the number of play epiosodes decreases but the number of utterances increases.
>
> only self-guiding speech increased significantly with age. The self-guiding speech of older children in overt form is dialogue which

> develops into silent inner speech. The monologue serves the same function for the younger child but without the element of "planfulness."

This researcher asks that teachers support children's efforts to converse in social situations, that they encourage children's desire to play imaginatively. She suggests that teachers help children to verbalize their thoughts around concrete objects they encounter, that they talk together about their shared experiences, that they discuss the themes in dramatic play.

What then is development in language? Is it style? Content? The quantity and variety of language used? In the preschool child maturity in language development is commensurate to the use of a greater number of words, a greater mean sentence length, a greater variety of words and sentence types, more complexity of structure and superior coherence. (Wilkerson, 1978). Development can be seen in the child's progressive mastery of new and more complex levels of discourse: from recording to reporting to generalizing to logical argumentation; from drama to narrative to exposition to theorizing. In the early years children are very concerned with what-is-happening-now. Sometimes they are interested in what-happened then. Occasionally what-happens and what-may-happen will capture their imaginations.

But when children have gained a facility with language they begin to experiment, to poke fun, to test and explore

the limits of language on their way to mastery. This evidence of metalinguistic awareness shows that they are cognizant of language forms in and of themselves. (Schwartz, 1981). So children begin to chant, to rhyme, to indulge in sound play, pattern play and meaning play. And this pleasurable practice brings with it a sense of pride and a feeling of power. Language play often accompanies other activities and includes peers. Together they play with language, and their play often becomes a crescendo of delight.

Playing and talking with friends is a potent context for language learning. Conversations between peers have a special place because these conversations are between equal partners. Peers learn many basic language lessons from each other: to take turns, to stick to the topic, to say what you mean clearly enough to be understood. Oral competence grows out of a rich background of experiences and develops best in the social context of home and school where there are meaningful relationships and interactions with peers or siblings, parents or teachers.

Facilitative environments enable the child to acquire flexible, colorful language. (Wishon, et al, 1986). "The observation and analysis of children's literacy development in informal settings hold exciting promise for the extension of our knowledge of how children become effective appropriators of language in all its forms and of the contextual factors that may amplify or restrict that development." (Wishon et al., p. 91). Planning stimulating learning experiences is the responsibility of the caregiver. Such experiences as

picnics, excursions to neighborhood points of interest, fantasy play and story books provide the experiential base for vivid, imaginative language. On the other hand, a mechanistic view of language that depends upon rote learning and memorization does not guarantee responsive, generative and the building of concepts and ideas. "... children's oral language is based on their experiences (real and fantasized); they mean to mean every time they speak." (p. 93). And because the adult has shared the child's world of experiences she can enter the child's world of meaning and encourage the child to use language to convey what he means to mean.

The roots of literacy occur in advance of instruction; literacy is nurtured in the home environment as the child listens to his mother reading a story or as he watches her bake a cake or as he busies himself drawing a picture while his mother talks or sings doing her housework. A child's home is usually a safe, nurturing, risk-free setting for learning where he is encouraged to explore, to ask endless questions, to garner information from concrete, everyday experiences. His ability to learn from his own activity is recognized and valued. But these positive qualities which support literacy learning are not carried over to the school in many cases. There is more likely to be a major shift in the method of learning, to the detriment of the child-learner.

The classroom is a context for learning with activities and experiences, norms and routines, purposes and goals. The

teacher sets the pace; the children and the teacher together determine the tone. This social context, this classroom world can be thought of as a resource. A significant element in the classroom setting is the verbal environment created by the adults and how they talk to children: the words used, the quality of the silence, the amount of talk, the timbre and volume of the speech. The effect of the verbal environment can be positive or negative. In a classroom with a positive verbal environment the teacher used words to meet children's needs. She is acutely aware of the content of what she says as well as the affective impact her words have. She is available, alert and ready to respond to children. In such classrooms there's warmth, acceptance, respect and empathy. Each child in a classroom with a positive verbal environment benefits: the perception of his self-worth is enhanced; his ability to express himself with confidence is improved; his readiness to explore ideas and relate to others is strengthened. (Kostelnick, 1988). Conversely, the verbal behaviors that create a negative verbal environment convey to children attitudes of insensitivity and aloofness, making children feel inadequate, confused or angry. What adults say to children is key to how children perceive themselves. Teachers' verbalizations, then, deserve our close attention.

The amount of verbal interaction is an index of the quality of a given preschool; it is, moreover, an important determinant of language skill. To test these assumptions

McCartney (1984) studied the verbal environment of nine day care centers. The observational records were coded to measure the functions and quantity of verbal interaction. Four dimensions of the functional types of utterances were measured:

control ("Stop that!")
representational ("The trucks and cars are on the bottom shelf.")
expressive ("I really like your building."
social ("Let's play with this.") The findings were related to the children's language development as assessed by a battery of tests. It was concluded that the total number of functional utterances is a significant predictor of children's language development. On the other hand, a high number of control utterances is a negative predictor. Children's language, it appears, develops better when there is a low proportion of control utterances and a high proportion of representational utterances. Children benefit from having experiences in which they are given information and are encouraged to supply information. Children also do better when they have opportunities to engage in conversations with adults, especially when they feel free enough and confident enough to initiate the conversations. The amount of peer talk (in this study) seems to have little influence on language develoment, probably because it replaces the more important caregiver talk. Peer talk is less valuable

because the structure of peer speech is poorer, and the content is more egocentric. Children respond to a verbally stimulating environment and where there is verbal interaction with the teacher as well as with peers children's communicative competence develops to their advantage.

To become skilled in the use of language is the most important task asked of young children. They need numerous opportunities to encounter language and use language in ways that make sense to them: language must be linked to life experience. (Beardley, Mareck-Zeman, 1987). Preschoolers, as they progress through a day, week, months learn the power of language because words help them deal with their concerns. The teacher articulates the events, routines and schedules, enabling the child to gain mastery over the new world of school: words have been linked to experiences and he makes connections. And as the child's name is put on his work he makes the connection between who he is and what he does. And then, for example, in a card making activity where the child plays with printed greetings as he makes cards he discovers that words express ideas. Or a child tells stories which the teacher writes down and "through story telling and dictation the child comes to realize that by some 'sorcery' the words that he speaks (Oral Tradition) becomes letters on paper at the teacher's hand. Somehow, no matter who reads those letters, those words on paper always tells the same story. (The Written Word)," (p. 164). Facility with words leads to literacy.

Storytelling is a vehicle that develops a number of language skills: fluency, vocabulary, language functions and story conventions. (Hough et al., 1987). The assumption is that a concrete stimulus (a picture, a wordless book, e.g.) provides the best context for developing these skills. However, the authors found that the context in which language is produced determines the quality of the language. The presentation of a single picture and the invitation to tell a story resulted in simple reporting. To lift the storytelling above the reporting level required verbal interaction between teacher and child. Wordless books, it was shown, have a potential for language development, but only if the teacher helps the child connect the events and characters. Asking a child to tell a story (without any visual props) proved to be the most effective way to elicit higher levels of language. When children tell an original story they use more dialogue, imagining and reasoning. There is likely to be a beginning, a middle and end, useful story conventions which provide structure. Children need ample opportunities to tell their own stories, to tell about events from their own lives, to re-tell stories they have enjoyed.

There appears to be a developmental pattern to the art of storytelling and children learn it over time with the encouragement of an interested, listening adult. (Magee & Sutton-Smith, 1983). In the typical storytime the adult is the storyteller. But if the adult-storyteller would share the story with the child using a scaffolding-type of dialogue

(describing, questioning, turn-taking and giving feedback), the child would then be encouraged to experiment with assuming the role of storyteller as he points to pictures in the book and asks questions. In the next stage he becomes a contributing partner in the storytelling by responding, naming, anticipating events, exclaiming, and putting himself in the story. Gradually, the child ventures to tell his own stories, experiencing a sense of his own originality and coming to know storytelling as a creative medium.

The first step in any literature and language program is for the child to discover delight in books, to experience the magic and power of words. The picture book provides a rich opportunity for the preschool children to learn language, to bring meaning and take meaning from literature. Evocative techniques and enriching activities used with picture book reading enable children to deepen their knowledge and appreciation of language and literature. (Williamson, 1988). When children participate in a puppet show of a loved story like Where the Wild Things Are or see a film strip of The Enormous Turnip they are developing their knowledge and appreciation by experiencing stories presented in different formats and contexts.

Two features of joint-book reading that lead to language acquisition are the routinization of the book reading situation and the predictable modeled utterances of the adult. Television viewing meets these criteria. Television viewing, then, can be considered "a talking picture book, a prop for

language acquisition." (Lemish & Rice, 1986). In a program such as Sesame Street, for example, there is routine, recurring formats, predictable, simplified, redundant dialogue. Children frequently use TV as a source of verbal routines in their play, indicating that they learn language from TV watching. There are linguists, Lemish-Rice point out, such as E. V. Clark,who feel that TV dialogue is not suitable; it is "appealing gibberish" or at best only "intermittently comprehensible" and therefore does not facilitate children's language learning. Viewing in this study is not "a matter of passive solitary consumption of the medium, but is instead embedded in a rich verbal interaction that has strong parallels with mother-child-book-reading routines". (p. 252). It is noted that children's preferences for viewing programs that are comprehensible to them allows for the building of extensive language repetoires. "Social interactions with coviewing adults support children's earliest understanding of the medium and, in turn, introduce new concepts to children." (p. 254). Adults contribute to the initiation and maintenance of children's talk by their responses, comments and questions. They can use co-viewing as an opportunity to correct, clarify, challenge, interpret, expand or relate TV content to children's every day experiences and so add dimension to their learning.

Of signal importance to language development is the opportunity for children to practice and experiment with language. The basic activities of the preschool day afford

such practice. (Robson, 1983). In pretend play children can go beyond concrete materials and use abstract language. The housekeeping area and the block area provide a focal point for creative language. The lively conversations at mealtimes give opportunities to introduce and practice complex language since events and places are described from memory. The study of children's conversations can inform teachers regarding the style and complexity of children's language. Capitalizing on this information she can then encourage and stimulate appropriate exchanges.

Activities where children and adults interact present an ideal opportunity for teachers to model language complexities using two useful language strategies: expansion and extension. (Garrard, 1987). Discussions of direct experiences - role playing, puppetry, storytelling, art activities and building projects - supply language training opportunities in complexities. "Anytime a child initiates coversation about what she or he is interested in, and an adult participates in the discussion, however ordinary the dialogue may be, the adult is aiding the child in developing language. (This) preclude(s) the need for intervention programs by providing children with a wide variety of play activities and projects that lend themselves to conversation <u>before</u>, <u>during</u> and especially <u>after</u> participating in them." (p. 21). Progress in communication depends upon children taking part in shared activities with adults in

which conversation is encouraged, utterances are addressed to them and there is responsive feedback.

Children's avid curiosity about their world impels them to explore the immediate environment gathering facts, picking up words, reaching conclusions (Clem and Feathers, 1986). These researchers studied one five year old's efforts to learn all he could about spiders. Their purpose was to discover what they could of the relationship between children's investigation of the world as information (content) and their use of language to do it. They observed J over a three month period as he freely explored language and information relating to spiders in his own home. His learning tasks were self-generated, and he learned through listening to a tape recording of a book about spiders, poring over picture books, through dialoques, and making drawings. His learning activities were multi-dimensional and cyclical. He repeatedly cycled through topics and learned new things with each encounter. J used his verbalizations and questions in his drawings and writings in his attempts to describe, explain and record information he garnered. The authors concluded that real learning whether about language or content does not begin or end at a particular point, that learning is facilitated when it is learner-controlled. They found that the learning of content is directly related to the functional use of language.

There is a wealth of material in the literature concerning child language, an impressive number of studies

detailing the influence of the mother on the development of the young child's language, but much less is available pertaining to the impact of the teacher's language on the child's language. The emphasis is on classroom activities and the contribution these make to language development and literacy. However, with the recognition of the crucial part interaction plays, the teacher and her verbal behavior is receiving increasing attention.

Other aspects related to the subject of oral language development addressed in the literature include communication, discourse, language arts, literacy, teacher education, teacher effectiveness; other fields that touch this area include adult development, curriculum, learning theory, linguistics, parenting, pedagogy.

CHAPTER III

ANTICIPATED OUTCOMES AND EVALUATION INSTRUMENTS

Statement of General Goals

The overarching goal of this practicum was to enhance the language environment of the day care classroom. To accomplish this goal the quality of the teachers' own language, a potent contextual factor, required improvement. And since the classroom activities and experiences are the base from which language develops, these aspects of the early childhood setting had to be enriched. The objectives, then, were these: to identify, develop and implement certain program elements and practices that lifted the over-all quality of the language environment.

Behavioral Expectations

1. Day Care Teachers will accurately evaluate the verbal environment of their classrooms.

2. Day Care Teachers will develop and implement play situations and experiences that stimulate and build language.

3. Day Care Teachers will identify and use developmentally appropriate expressive language in a variety of classroom activities.

4. They will demonstrate an increase in the number of teacher/child interactions and the functional content of those interactions will be improved.

5. They will be able to explain, describe and apply their knowledge of adult and child interchanges, be able to use the tools and activities that support and sustain these interchanges.

Evaluation Instruments Used

1. The verbal environment of the day care classroom was evaluated by a pre-post questionnaire of oral language procedures and practices in the classroom. (Appendix C). This questionnaire is a modified version of "A Conversational Inventory" from the book Talk with Your Child. (Weiner, 1988, p. 9-11). It was selected because it addressed relevant aspects of the objectives of the practicum, and the vocabulary, format and tone were suitable.

2. The number and variety of enriched activities recorded in an "events calendar" in conjunction with an examination of petty cash expenditures indicated the implementation of program elements that foster language development. (Appendix D). The simplicity of the form, a calendar, made it easy for the teachers to jot down their program activities.

3. Five observations of teacher/child verbal interactions recorded during a variety of activities were analyzed for functional verbal behaviors. (Appendix E.) All observations of the teachers were one-page running records of their activity and verbalization for a 15" segment. The record was later analyzed for the kinds of verbal functions the teachers used: social talk: "Let's play;" representa-

tional talk: "The paints are on the easel;" expressive talk: "Oh, I really like your complicated block building;" control: "Stop that." The method of observing and recording teacher activity is familiar to the teachers and non-threatening, since it is regularly used as part of on-going supervision of teachers at the writers work place. The running record preserved rich details, and gave color and light to the context in which the teacher-talk occurred. The verbal functions were suggested by McCartney's article, "Effects of Quality Day Care Environments on Children's Language Development." In addition, the teachers' confidence in using the various communication techniques in certain situations were measured by a semantic differential scale. (Appendix F.) The semantic differential scale was constructed because it is a good tool for measuring affect.

4. A "guideline for improving teacher talk and child-talk", developed by the day care teachers as a group project was examined and rated for concept development on a 16 point scale. (Appendix G). This scale was adapted from Boyer's concept development continuum described in her paper, "A Case Study: Teachers Learning and Language Development." (1986, p. 19-28). The 16 point scale provided a method to determine the teachers comprehension of concepts reflected by the level of their use of specialized terms. The discussions which accompanied the writing of the guideline were recorded by two of the teachers and the writer; the scale applied to these notes.

5. Self contract was used with the recording of teacher/child and child/child conversations. (Appendix H). The use of self contract and self evaluation forms gave the participants a sense of autonomy and a way of measuring their progress.

6. Participants evaluation. (Appendix I). The Participants Evaluation was adapted from the Nutrition and Human Performance Participant Evaluation, a hand-out at the Conference of the Pennsylvania Dietetic Association, May 1989. It is a questionnaire which uses a combination of multiple choice and open-ended responses. This format is useful in determining gradations of attitudes and brings attention to salient issues. Because items were weighted, differential scoring was used even though it complicated the procedure.

Standards of Achievement

The following standards of achievement were projected:

1. The discrepancy rates between scores attained by the teachers and the program specialist on the oral language questionnaire will be reduced by 25%.

2. The average of enriched experiences during October and March will be compared with the averages of June and July or June and August, depending on staff vacation schedules. The standard of achievment will be a 50% increase in the number of enriched experiences planned for children.

3. The standard of achievement for confidence in their use of various communication techniques in a variety of situations will be a score of 75% on a semantic differential scale. (Appendix F).

4. Comparisons of pre/post observations of verbal behavior will be as follows: an acceptable increase in the total number of interactions: 15%,
representational utterances: 12% (increase)
expressive utterances: 3% (increase)
social utterances: 3% (increase) and a decrease of control utterances by 1%.

5. Six significant concepts expected to be found in the written guideline will be placed on a 16 point scale that pinpoints the level of understanding of the concepts. An acceptable score will be 72 or approximately 75%.

6. Self Contract: the standard of achievement will be 75% of the teachers (6) "adequately" fulfilling their contracts.

7. Participants' Evaluation: Scores of questions 1, 4, 5, 6, added and averaged, yields an index. An index of 7 indicated that the standard of achievement was achieved.

Scores assigned as follows:

Question 1 - 1 - 10

Question 4 - 1st statement checked = 2
2nd statement checked = 3
3rd statement checked = 4
4th statement checked = 0
5th statement checked = 1
6th statement checked = 2
Add on statement = 0

Question 5 - 1st statement checked = 1
2nd statement checked = 1
3rd statement checked = 3
4th statement checked = 4
5th statement checked = 3
6th statement checked = 3
7th statement checked = 3
8th statement checked = 3
9th statement checked = 3

Question 6 - 1 - 10

Question 7, 8, 9, 10 - "No" = 1, deducted from average of Questions 1-4,5,6.

CHAPTER IV

SOLUTION STRATEGIES

Description of Strategies

From a review of the literature, it is evident that picture books and stories are eminently effective in fostering language development. Teachers, childcare workers and parents alike value the pleasures and potency of reading aloud. Reading aloud to young children contributes sfgnificantly to the development of oral language and growth toward literacy. (Magee and Sutton-Smith, 1983, Goldfield, 1984, Teale and Martinez, 1988, Whitehurst et al., 1988). These writers make cogent and practical suggestions to enhance the effectiveness of the adult's picture-book reading and their use of story activities.

Whitehurst suggests three organizing principles to guide a design for intervention:

- encouraging the child to talk about the picture,
- asking questions that require the child to describe and explain what is happening, and providing feedback that gives the child more information,
- providing progression by being sensitive to the child's developing ability, that is, to move from merely naming objects in the book to talking about the attributes of the objects depicted.

Magee and Sutton-Smith, in tracing the child's development from being read to, to telling his own stories, point out that it is important for the story reader and the listening child

to develop a dialogue. And the key to dialogue is positive feedback from the adult. The feedback should be characterized by short responses to the child's questions, repetition of his responses and frequent pauses to encourage him to add comments. It is essential for the child to be a contributing partner in the active process of story time. The researchers caution, however, that over-prompting and too many questions will be experienced by the child as pressure and cause him to withdraw. Because the adult is a patient, interested listener as well as an engaging story teller the child is encouraged to participate but does not feel he must.

Goldfield echoes the aforementioned researchers. She agrees that books are for looking at and talking about, and as books are read and re-read the adult augments the learning value by asking more depthful questions and adding more information. And by experimenting with variations of well-known stories ("the fine art of fooling around") - adding a chant or a song - the pleasure and power of the story will be increased. Reading aloud, she reminds us, is more than Goldilocks and the Three Bears; it is warmth, language learning and literacy.

Teale and Martinez focus on the use of books in the classroom and suggest a three pronged approach to ensure valuable experiences with books:

- Reading aloud on a daily basis,
- Establishing a classroom library,
- Encouraging children to interact with books.

They emphasize that storybook reading, which gives children access to meanings, is a key role of the teacher. These writers also stress the importance of a carefully selected, balanced collection of books, available and accessible to the children. It is essential, too, they write, for the teacher to talk about books, to explore ways in which stories relate to the children's lives. It is the teacher's and children's language and social interaction that surrounds the words themselves, that cause storybook reading to have the positive effects it does." (p. 12).

Hough, Nurss and Wood (1987) in their paper "Tell Me a Story: Making Opportunities for Elaborated Language" describe a study they conducted of story telling contexts to learn which produced the greatest range of language skills. They asked children to tell a story using a single picture as a prop, to make up a story around a wordless book and to create a story without a concrete stimulus. They found that the context in which the story is produced affected the qualities of the language. The assumption was that a picture or a wordless book would result in better quality stories. However, the single picture resulted in simple reporting, and to move beyond this level required verbal interaction between the teacher and the child telling the story. When a wordless book was used as a stimulus for story telling the child needed to be helped to make connections between the events and the characters depicted in the book. The most effective situation for producing

elaborated language was for the child to have the opportunity to tell a story from his own life or to retell a favorite story or to create an imaginative tale. To encourage fluency, more vocabulary, wider use of language functions and story conventions, children need to be invited to make up their own stories.

Lemish and Rice (1986) in "Television as a Talking Picture Book" note that two aspects of the language learning environment that have been studied are (1) the shared activities in which the adult's responses are modified to match the child's ability to comprehend the language and (2) the nature of the activity shared with the child. The former aspect refers to what is called the mother register, a topic investigated by Catherine Snow. There is also a teacher register studied by Courtney Cazden, among others.

Joint picture book reading is an example of a shared activity which promotes language learning. "Mothers tend to read picture books with their children in an interactive dialogue-like structure that is a format well suited to teaching children labels for things and people." (p. 252). The two features of picture book reading that promote the acquisition of language are the routinization of the book reading situation and the predictable, modeled utterances of the adult. The authors believe that television viewing meets these criteria, and so television can be thought of as a talking picture book which facilitates language learning. formats and uses predictable, simplified redundant dialogue.

Television as a medium, follows routines, has recurring formats and uses predictable, simplified redundant dialogue. (Consider a program like Seseme Street in these respects.) The authors insist that "viewing is not a matter of passive solitary consumption of the medium, but is instead embedded in a rich verbal interaction that has strong parallels with mother-child book reading routines." (p. 254).

Children do verbalize while watching television. They point out objects, characters and animals. They ask questions regarding the content. They also repeat the dialogue or the adult's comments and describe what is happening. The co-viewing adult points out features of the program, asks questions to clarify the content, responds to the child's comments and describes the action. Thus the adult facilitates the initiation and maintenance of the child's talk, reinforcing the child's language learning. T.V. viewing from this vantage point, then, may be considered a tool for language acquisition, especially in view of the fact that by the time a child is three years old he is a confirmed T.V. watcher, spending more than an hour and a half each day looking at television. However, this optimistic evaluation of T.V. as a powerful language learning tool is controversial and is predicated on a co-viewing, interested adult using T.V. as an opportunity to clarify, expand, interpret and relate the content to the child's every day experiences. Too often the child watches alone, struggling to extract meanings from the rapidly, changing images on the screen, while the caretaker is occupied elsewhere.

The adult or teacher who in a relational context encourages conversation around an interest of the child's, who is also a story-teller or story-maker, a person who plans sense-stimulating and mind-stretching activities facilitates oral competency and creativity. She is indeed a resource for the language learning child.

The classroom itself is a resource for the child who is building his linguistic skills. When the classroom is a community of talkers and these talkers are busy exploring, experimenting and investigating many topics of interest, guided by a teacher who is herself a learner, concepts are developed and words are learned. Play as a curricular tool is basic to the growth of language, and strategies that widen the world for preschool children - trips and excursions, cooking and gardening, role-playing and block-building - facilitate and enrich learning. These experiences allow children to gather new information and allows language to grow, particularly when the teacher discusses these shared activities before, during and after participating in them, using colorful, multisyllabic words to describe the events. (Wishon et al., 1986 Garrard, 1987, Shapiro & Dorion, 1987). But, stimulating experiences and activities may not be enough to facilitate, sustain and maintain language development.

Tenant and her colleagues (1988) conducted a research study in a day care center over a nine week period. Their purpose was to increase caregiver-child conversations by providing extra toys as a focus for discussions. The results

demonstrated that an "enriched environment" (extra toys) was not sufficient alone to improve the quality and quantity of language. The crucial component proved to be training for caregivers in responsive feedback. With training the caregivers used more extensions, expansions and open-ended questions, all focused on topics of interest selected by the child. It is not known (at this point) whether or not the training for caregivers can promote language growth without extra toys. The researchers conclude: "To provide a socially responsive context for language learning by children in day care, the setting should contain a variety of play materials and elective activities, adults who give responsive feedback in their interactions with children; and child-caregiver ratios and programs which can provide for the time many child-initiated interactions require." (p. 50).

Over and over again the cardinal role of the teacher in supporting language development is emphasized. Not only is it important for her to set the stage for learning and to plan enriching experiences, she must also be ever mindful of the impact her verbal behavior has on the child's self-image and self-esteem. Kostelnick, Stein and Whiren (1988) describe the characteristics of positive and negative environments, indicating that the teacher's verbalizations are a key factor in creating that environment. Too many busy, harried, thoughtless teachers are unaware of the negative effects their verbal behavior has on children. Many teacher's practices, seemingly necessary, contribute to a

negative environment that hamper learning. Teachers often use numerous questions, in rapid succession. They inform, instruct and hardly ever listen to the faltering attempts of children to formulate ideas. Too often the teacher's principle way of relating to children is through directives, commands and admonishments, Kostelnick and her collegues point out, if teachers were to concentrate on the affect of their words as well as on the content of their words, a more positive verbal environment could be established. Words should be used to satisfy children's needs and make them feel valued, and children's interests should be the basis for conversations. Time is often cited as a barrier to talking informally with each child, but these writers suggest that teachers use the many, small occasions during the day - eating, dressing, settling down to a nap, assembling for a story or getting ready to go outdoors - to converse with children, individually or in small groups. Further, to improve the verbal environment of the classroom requires planning and deliberate implementation. It can be accomplished in small steps with the practice of simple strategies:

(1) keeping track of verbal behaviors,

(2) using a tape recorder as a means of self-observation,

(3) using selected communication techniques until they become natural and easy to use purposefully.

Establishing a positive verbal environment is a worthwhile goal for it conveys to children warmth, acceptance and respect and makes it possible for the children to express themselves, explore ideas and relate to others with confidence. The goal is attainable: the teacher need only be available, alert and prepared to respond to children with thought and sincere interest.

Teachers and caregivers can improve and change their style of interacting with children if they use the scientific tools of observation, recording and analysis, thus becoming more sensitive to the collaborative features of conversation and more effective in using responsive feedback to sustain dialoque. (Wood & Wood, 1983, Pinnell and Galloway, 1987). "To advance the language of pupils, teachers must first gain insight into their knowing, their competence, their values and customs and focus not on language, but on context and meaning." (King, 1987, pg. 362).

The typical school conversation consists of a series of questions asked by the teacher and a child's brief replies. The brevity of the exchange is due to the teacher's pressing need to distribute her attention among a number of children and the teacher's desire to see that the child is suitably involved in an activity. A conversation that extends beyond six turns rarely occurs; a discussion of a topic of mutual interest in the context of on-going activities seldom takes place. (Tizard, 1981). When the teacher's role shifts from that of interviewer to resource, when explanations and

descriptions replace commands and directives, when there are ample opportunities to use language for thought and communication then language flourishes and comprehension builds.

Activities that invite and sustain conversation where meanings can be developed and misunderstandings unraveled are word games, cooking, puppetry, grocery store play and other settings for dramatic play, in addition to the usual book-making and story activities. (Matlick, 1981). As important as it is for a teacher to create settings where children's language can expand and provide a context for learning, it is crucial for the teacher to listen to children's answers and questions in order to understand the intent of the communication, to hear the underlying message. To create a sequence in language proficiency it is necessary for the teacher to listen, to ask for details, to identify ideas and feelings, for the goal is to extend thinking and guide toward problem solving. (Matlick, 1981). These teacher strategies, these interactional skills, are the responsibility of the teacher to develop and use.

But the teacher herself may be linguistically insecure. Moreover, she may be inept in organizing the resources to extend children's verbal abilities; she may overlook the importance of expanding children's repertoire of words for talking about events and find it difficult to arrange sufficient opportunities to use language. These skills, that she may lack, are essential for developing a curriculum that supports language learning. (Cazden et al., 1981) The

impetus for this practicum was the concern the day care teachers have regarding the children's language deficiencies. When the language environments of these classrooms were assessed, it came to light that the teachers were in fact neither using communication techniques that encourage language development nor planning enough enriched experiences to ensure the growth of language and concepts.

McCartney (1984) in her study of nine day care centers in Bermuda asked the question, "Is there a relationship between the language children hear and their ability to use language well?" She measured the kind of language children hear and the children's language skill. Findings indicate that the sheer number of interactions as well as the quality of the interaction makes a difference. The greater the number of interactions, the higher the children scored on language tests; the higher the proportion of informational utterances ("the blocks are on the shelf") in relation to the proportion of control utterances ("Stop that."), the higher the scores for language skills. Centers with high levels of verbal interaction tended to be centers where caregivers planned creative activities and individualized the program. The study also suggests ways of interacting with children to promote language skills: in centers where children had highly developed language skills

- there was time for the children to talk to the adults,

- there was time for children to explore the environment with their peers,
- adults listened to children with evident interest,
- caregivers invited children to share or request information as they pursued their interests,
- caregivers adapted their teaching-styles to the particular needs of individual children.

An ability to engage children in extended conversations is a hallmark of a superior teacher. The quality of the teacher's exchanges, the encouragement to explore ideas in conversation, the use of shared activities as a focus of conversation - all foster language and learnings, (Rogers et al,1987), - and are approaches that can be learned. (Tenant et al, 1988).

When children are exposed to a language-rich interactional environment, they are able to construct language rules and use language for a wide range of purposes. In such an environment teachers use the techniques of expansion, recasting, modeling and narration. Their speech is responsive: typically, they respond to the child's prior communication; they continue a topic the child has introduced; they suggest new activities to be pursued. It has been shown that there is a relationship between the quality of the staff-talk and the level of the child's language development. The adult's

language input and language mastery experiences are significant caregiver variables. (Honig, 1982).

Teachers may experience difficulties and feel vulnerable when changing procedures or introducing new skills in their teaching. With a grant to develop a language arts program for children in inner city day care centers, McCarthy and Landerholm (1978) thought the project could be accomplished through supplimentary workshops. They soon found that to be effective they needed to plan with the day care teachers directly and work in the classrooms alongside the teachers, to demonstrate the materials and methods that expanded and developed language skills. They assessed the level at which teachers were working and found teachers were working on three levels. Level 1 teachers were providing good physical care, but many materials were not being used and remained on the shelf in the closet. These teachers needed help in planning more varied activites, assistance in developing interest centers and establishing a flexible, functional time schedule. Teachers on level 2 were using basic activities and materials, but were not planning well. These teachers needed help with ideas for cognitive development and new ways of teaching and responding to children. Level 3 teachers were well-organized and their classrooms were learning-oriented. However, they needed to improve their understanding of learning theory and child development; they needed help in translating theory into everyday practice. The project staff worked with individual day care teachers in two centers from

one to three hours a day for four days a week from three months to two years, depending upon the support required. The project team concluded that the training strategy was effective owing to the intensity of the training and the demonstrated ability of the project staff to implement activities successfully. They comment that day care staff often feel isolated; having another adult come to work with them and share ideas encouraged them to try new ideas and methods. The basic ingredients for implementing change were the active involvement of administrators and teachers and a flexible project plan that allowed teachers to choose the materials and approaches germane to their needs.

Delano (1972) reports on an in-service plan to help traditional teachers internalize open education principles and methods in their classrooms. She anticipated that teachers would regress when confronted with new ideas and responded to their need to be treated as likeable, wanted, accepted, knowing persons. She accomodated teachers' needs for continuous feedback and provided for close, warm contacts with the project staff to make it possible for participants to accomplish their curriculum projects. Major competencies required (and strengthened by the design of the in-service plan) were an appreciation of the uniqueness of the individual, the ability to recognize developmental levels as well as the ability to prescribe appropriate activities. The training plan included three phases: a phase in which information was presented (in-put), followed by a phase in

which participants demonstrated their understanding by designing, developing and implementing self-selected projects in their own classrooms with the support of project staff (application). In the third phase (internalization) the projects, activities and procedures, which came to be prized and valued, were carried out independently. The progression from input to internalization occurs over time and is facilitated by enabling supervision.

Feichtner (1972) describes her design for providing an effective student teaching experience, an experience that will provide the beginning teacher with the requisite skills to be successful. These skills are best developed in a non-threatening environment with the guidance of a significant other. Feichtner presumes a hierarchy of teacher needs, similar to Maslow's hierarchy of need satisfaction. The need levels are:

1. Mastery of tool skills.
2. Acceptance of responsibility for teaching. behavior.
3. Acceptance of children's perceptions of the classroom environment.
4. Objective evaluation of cause/effect relationships in the classroom.
5. Choosing a direction for growth.

This hierarchy of needs must be considered when the student teaching experience is planned. The student teaching experience, to be most useful, has to be based on the need

level of the particular student. Each student's teaching experience, then, will have a different emphasis. This thought-provoking approach - recognizing that students are at different levels in their development, requiring the adjustment of learning opportunities to build skills, helping prospective teachers to explore the teaching-self - should contribute positively to teacher development.

Description of Selected Solutions

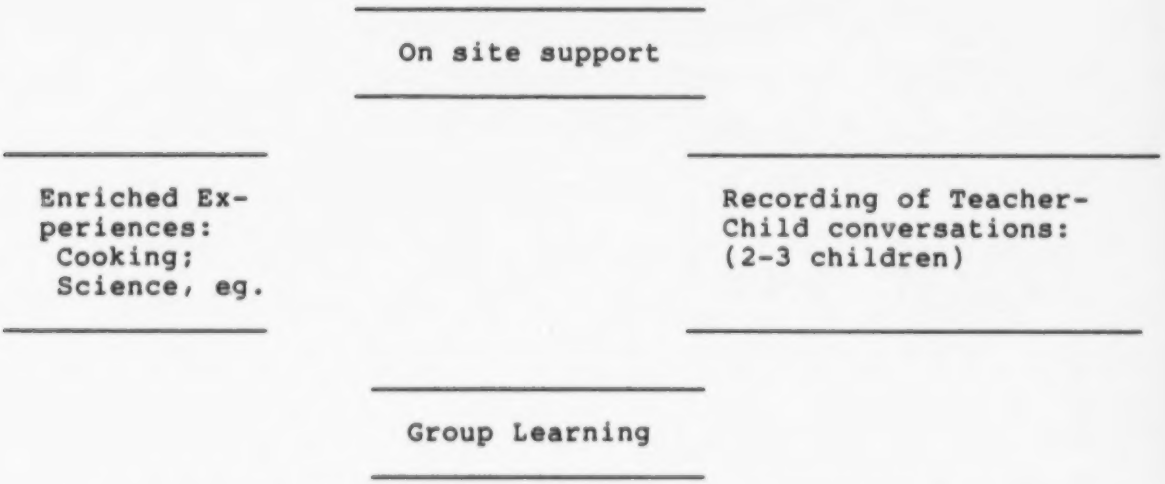
Observations of the day care teachers indicated that there was a paucity of rich and varied language input, and little use of natural opportunities to converse with children as they work and play in the preschool setting. The major goal of this practicum was to improve the language environment of the day care classroom. At the outset it seemed important to consider the activities and experiences that foster language learning, to listen to the verbal exchanges of the teacher, to pinpoint intervention techniques that facilitate the development of the preschool child's language. To provide a knowledge and experiential base, a series of workshops were held, preliminary to the implementation of the practicum. In the workshops, information was presented on picturebook and story activities, children's language development, teacher's language, communication techniques, and program activities (Dramatic Play and Fantasy, Trips and Excursions, Cooking and Nutrition). An important part of this in-service program was the provision of tape recorders for

the teachers to use as a means of self-observation, as an invitation to self-monitor and self-correct their classroom discourse. To guide them the book How to Talk to Kids so Kids will Listen and Listen to Kids So Kids will Talk (Faber & Mazel, 1980) was given to them to use as a resource.

Having provided information, experiences, resources and guides to action did not guarantee that new information will be introduced into the classroom. Even though workshops were designed to take into account the learning styles of the participants, the need for experiential learning, the importance of addressing problems identified by the group, our experience has been that only 20% - 30% of the staff actually incorporate their learnings into their classroom practice. Even though workshop participants were enthusiastic and fully intended to introduce new methods they seldom did. Situational barriers - the pressure of time, the lack of supplies, the large number of children, the particular combination of children - were the usual reasons given for not being able to implement program changes. Resistance of staff to innovations was also often cited by the day care teachers.

So to accomplish the goal of this practicum, given the difficulties day care teachers have in effecting change, it was crucial that efforts be concentrated on supporting the teacher in the classroom as she attempted to refine her

practice. The focus of the strategy solutions were four broad areas:


On site support
Enriched Experiences: Cooking; Science, eg.
Recording of Teacher-Child conversations: (2-3 children)
Group Learning

Feichtner (1972), Delano (1974) and McCarthy and Landerholm (1978) all write of the necessity and desirability of finding ways of working with teachers to bring about improvement in the individual teachers attitudes, skills and insights. They suggest that the emphasis in training be put on the growth of the individual teacher since improvement occurs within oneself. Teachers need to be helped to begin where they are, to solve problems they themselves identify. And the helping person (trainer or supervisor) must be able to work with and support the learner in a non-threatening environment so that the learner will be encouraged and challenged to try out new practices. Wih help planning stimulating, successful experiences that engage children's minds the teacher will be able to see herself differently and new ideas can be more readily translated into classroom practice.

Of course, feedback - on-going - and enabling - is a critical aspect in the process, for feedback provides a yardstick for growth. By being available to the teacher to hold the mirror up to her helping her discover her need to know the helping person, in this case the program specialist, provides a springboard for change. When feedback is translated into specific objectives and follow-up tasks are carried out, an atmosphere of approval, improvement is more likely to last.

McCarthy and Landerholm (1978) found that the nine inner city teachers with whom they worked were operating on one of three levels when they began working with them: custodial care, caregiving that was good-enough, learning-oriented caregiving. One of the major goals of the project staff was to develop an independent teacher who could appropriately apply theoretical ideas to her day-by-day teaching. They worked with teachers according to the need from a period of three months to two years. Working from the teacher's strengths, they used a flexible and individual approach based on mutual planning. Likewise, Feichtner (1972) in developing her student-teaching model assigned critic teachers to particular students. They were matched, based on an assessment of the critic teacher's capabilities and the student-teacher's needs, and together they designed activities that would advance the growth and development of the student as a teacher. As these authors describe their projects, it is evident that key to supporting

growth and fostering change is for the helping person to use a flexible approach that enables teachers to select goals and activities most applicable to their needs. They also note that there is more growth when there is active interest and a willingness to grow, less growth when there is a lack of open-ness.

Much change and improvement results from individual, person-to-person experiences. But, group experiences can generate improvement, too. Problem-solving approaches that are experiential but are task-oriented and educational have great merit. Delano's (1974) in-service design included a teachers' lab where teachers worked individually, or in small groups, as they wished, on developing curriculum materials. This feature of the in-service program was paralleled by group meetings where teachers shared what they had accomplished, critiqued each others work and planned the agenda for subsequent meetings. Working individually on self-selected projects and coming together as a group served to augment the meaning of their individual work. Sharing ideas, talking together, helped participants adapt or build upon the ideas of others and strengthened their sense of purpose. Delano's in-service plan was designed to facilitate the process of internalization. It capitalized on the successful experiences the workshop staff had had with these open-classroom teachers during the two previous years.

Another researcher (Bayer, 1986) worked with a group of six teachers to develop a policy statement regarding an area of teaching practice they had just come to know. They studied together and thoroughly discussed the content of the proposed guideline. Their "exploratory talk" was a way of talking out loud: a tool for learning, and the beginning point for assimilating new ideas. The researcher was able to trace the teachers' learning by following the use of certain technical terms from a non-specific, often incorrect use, to a precise and correct use. She found that the give-and-take of discussion shaped and facilitated learning. Teachers, as learners, used their familiar ideas, exploratory talk, and each other as resources to begin to solve a real problem. The policy statement which evolved from their discussions was a tangible outcome of their learning. It enhanced the participants' self esteem. Further, this strategy provided opportunities to share information with peers and build understanding of content, to become involved in group problem-solving, to cooperatively develop a useful document. The experience resulted in feelings of accomplishment, and most important, a greater sense of shared responsibility for implementing change.

These two strategies, individual problem-solving experiences and group problem-solving experiences, complement each other and have the possibility of maximizing teacher talents. They provide ways for teachers to explore the teaching self;

and help teachers develop the courage and confidence to work at solving their classroom problems.

Action Taken

Tne writer believes that the day care teachers would benefit from the interest and concern of the program specialist and be more able to risk trying out new approaches. On site support began with a planning session in which the teacher and the program specialist will decide on a direction for action to improve the language environment of her classroom, using data collected earlier as a starting point. (Speech survey, oral language inventory, event calendars, tape recordings.) The emphasis of each plan was different, for each teacher had varying needs.

The writer (program specialist) was available to each of the day care teachers one day a week for four consecutive weeks. The general pattern was observation, feedback, planning. The observation consisted of specimen record of the teacher during free play, working with a small group, meal time, large group time. There were also observations of children and other staff as desired by the teacher. Each specimen record of 10" was analyzed first of all for the teacher's verbal functions (McCartney, (1984) but could also be analyzed according to motivation theory, reinforcement theory, or even the lesson design of a small group project. The focus of the feedback was determined by the interest and need of the teachewr. But, each conference was a teaching opportunity and information was shared, mis-

shared, misconceptions corrected, problems confronted, points of view discussed and experience widened. The intention was to bring ready support and real help to the teacher from the vantage point of knowing and understanding the every day difficulties and frustrations she faced in the classroom.

The program specialist felt that the day care teachers were also helped to implement and sustain change by the cooperative learning experiences afforded by meeting as a group. So the day care teachers convened to study the techniques and skills of teachers who communicate effectively with children. One of the problems that contributes to the negative language environments is that day care teachers themselves have had limited exposure to good models of interactional skills. Administrative constraints prevent the teachers from having opportunities to observe teachers with excellent communication abilities. Asking the day care teachers to improve their communication techniques, to become adept in responsive feedback may be like asking them to play the organ by describing how it is done. As a substitute, to provide vicarious experience, scripts were developed from observations of teachers who have the ability to converse with children sensitively and responsively. These scripts were used with the day care teachers to provide them with models that could be imitated, and evaluated and adapted to their situation.

Teachers were also invited (but not compelled) to share their tapes with the group. It was hoped that these script

reading experiences would provide teachers with models of "the interpretation kind": models of teachers who describe and explain things to children, using expansion and extension techniques frequently. (Watson & Young, 1986.) The literature emphasizes the need for the adults to model language for children (Wood & Wood, 1983, Shapiro & Dorian, 1987, Kostelnick, 1988) but does not directly address the importance of models for adults. By extension we can assume the significance of having caregivers exposed to teachers who are themselves models of literacy.

Bayer's work with a group of teachers (1986) (whose task was the writing of a policy statement and demonstrated their concept development) suggests a strategy for assisting the day care teachers' learning of basic principles of language development and communication techniques. Participating in a series of group activities that results in the writing of a useful document is an ego-building experience. It provides a creative way for participants to gather information, marshall ideas and learn cooperatively. The process also helps participants discover gaps in their knowledge, learn problem-solving techniques and to appreciate each other's contributions. Working together, developing a curriculum guide, is a vehicle for stimulating learning, for effectively demonstrating that their knowledge is useful and can be shared with benefits accruing to all involved. It was hoped that the teachers would in this way experience "ownership", and, therefore, implementation would be facilitated.

Language learning grows out of a background of first-hand experiences: the language learning child dabbles in water, watches a caterpiller crawling on a leaf, experiments with a flashlight and learns the appropriate words because the caregiver has supplied them. The greater the variety of activities, the broader the concepts, the more vivid the language. (Wishon, et. al., 1986). In the preschool setting, it is the teacher's responsibility to plan stimulating experiences, to talk with the children about these direct experiences - the making of butter, the planting of marigolds - before, during and after the experience. (Genishi, 1988). Words are learned and concepts are developed when experiences are discussed. To enrich their social and intellectual learning children need a range of experiences to talk about and think about. These experiences need to be shared with their friends and their teachers and be the focus of their conversation. Children also need opportunities to practice and experiment with language and the affairs of the day allow this. When children are encouraged to talk freely to each other and their teachers, there is ample time to practice as the children engage in the many activities of the day: pretend play, sand play, water play, meal times and story time. Progress in communication is assumed when there is an array of enriching experiences. Therefore, as part of the practicum, teachers were expected to plan, implement and record experiences that are creative and of high-interest to preschool children.

But, provision of experiences is not enough. Not only do children need to have many rich, firsthand experiences to build a fund of information, they also need to learn the importance of words and how-they-mean. Since talk and learning are interdependent, it is critical for the teacher to engage children in meaning-oriented conversations. (Genishi & Dyson, 1984). It is important that teachers use appropriate communication techniques to facilitate the flow of conversation. The building of interactional skills is key to helping children explore their thoughts, formulate their ideas, and become skillful in the use of language. (Rogers et. al., 1987). The teacher also needs to be aware of the quality of her verbal exchanges and the effect these exchanges have on children. Recording her conversations with children is a strategy that will enable her to change and improve. (Wood & Wood, 1983, Kostelnick et. al., 1988). Conversation and the interchange of thought and ideas in the context of enriching experiences recorded and reflected upon can increase the quality of the discourse. To enable the teachers to monitor their growth and development in this area, self-contracts were used, a way of giving the learner a sense of her own autonomy.

It was anticipated that these four main approaches to improving the language environment of day care classrooms described above would be successful. It was expected that through the deliberate, collaborative efforts of the day

care teachers and the writer three essential objectives would be met:

- day care teachers will want to make language development a significant part of their program,.
- day care teachers will know how to foster language development,
- they will implement a program that enhances the language environment of the day care classroom.

Improvement would come through experiencing, through problem-solving.

Practicum Calendar

		Person/Group	Subject/Activity	Strategy	Place/Time
Week 1	T	D.C. Teachers	Modeling-	Scrip	C. Skill Learning Center.
	W		Communications Techniques	Reading "	1:00-2:45 C. Skill Learning Center
	Th	D.C. Teachers	Responsive Feedback CDA Training	Mini Workshop	1:00-1:15 1:15-2:45
Week 2	T	D.C. Teachers	Developing a Guideline- Group Task	Collaborative Learning	1:00-2:45 Center 1
	W	AK, Center 1	Observation/Conference/ Planning	Individualized Support	8 AM - 1:30
	Th	BL, Center 2	O/C/P	Indiv. Support	Center 2 (CSLC) 8 AM - 12:45
			Writing a Contract CDA Training	Mini Workshop	CSLC, 1:00 - 1:15 1:15 - 2:45
	F	CM, Center 3	O/C/P	Indiv. Support	Center 3, 8 AM - 1:30
Week 3	T	D.C. Teachers	Developing a Guideline Continued	Collaborative Learning	CSLC, 1:00-2:45
	W	FP, Center 6	O/C/P	Indiv. Support	Center 6, 8 AM - 1:30
	Th	JT, Center 10	O/C/P	"	Center 10, 8 AM - 12:00
			Appendix		
		D.C. Teachers	Discuss: Wally's Stories	Mini Workshop	CSLC, 1:00 - 1:15
	F	HR Center 8	CDA Training		1:25 - 2:45
			O/C/P	Indiv. Support	Center 8, 8 AM - 12:30
Week 4	T	D.C. Teachers	Developing a Guideline Continued	Collaborative Learning	CSLC, 1:00 - 2:45
	W	GQ, Center 7	O/C/P	Indiv. Support	Center 7, 8 AM - 1:30
	Th	I.S. Center 10	O/C/P	Indiv. Support	Center 10, 8 AM - 12:00
		D.C. Teachers	Analyze Conversation from Willy's Stories -	Mini Workshop	CSLC, 1:00 - 1:15
			CDA Training		1:15 - 2:45
	F	ED, Center 5	O/C/P	Indiv. Support	Center 5, 8 AM - 1:30
Week 5	Make up on-site visits as needed. Telephone conferences to centers. Teachers file reports (Record of Conversations, Event Calendars.				
Week 6	M	BL, Center 6	O/C/P	Indiv. Support	Center 6, 8 AM - 1:30
	W	CM, Center 3	"	" "	Center 3, "
	Th	ED, Center 5	"	" "	Center 5, "
	F	IS, Center 10	"	" "	Center 10 "
Week 7	M	GQ, Center 7	O/C/P	Indiv. Support	Center 7, 8 AM - 1:30
	T	BL, Center 6	"	" "	Center 6, "
	W	CM, Center 3	"	" "	Center 3, "
	Th	ED, Center 5	"	" "	Center 5 "
	F	IS, Center 10	"	" "	Center 10 "
Week 8	M	IS. Center 10	O/C/P	Indiv. Support	Center 10, 8 AM - 1:30
	T	GQ, Center 7	"	" "	Center 7, "
	W	BL, Center 6	"	" "	Center 6, "
	Th	CM, Center 3	"	" "	Center 3, "
	F	ED, Center 5	"	" "	Center 5, "

Practicum Calendar (Continued)

	Person/Group	Subject/Activity	Strategy	Place/Time
Week 9	M ED, Center 6	O/C/P	Indiv. Support	Center 5, 8 AM - 1:30
	T IS, Center 10	"	" "	Center 10, "
	W GQ, Center 7	"	" "	Center 7 "
	Th BL, Center 6	"	" "	Center 6 "
	F CM, Center 3	"	" "	Center 3 "
Week 10	M GQ, Center 7	"	Indiv. Support	Center 7, 8 AM - 1:30
	T D.C. Teachers (5)	Participants Evaluation	Discussion and Self Report	(SLC - 1:30 - 2:45
	Th JT, Center 10	O/C/P	Indiv. Support	Center 10, 8 AM - 1:30
	F FP, Center 6	"	" "	Center 6, 8 AM - 1:30
Week 11	M AK, Center 1	O/C/P	Indiv. Support	Center 1, 8 AM - 1:30
	T HR, Center 8	"	" "	Center 8, "
	W JT, Center 10	"	" "	Center 10, "
	Th FP, Center 6	"	" "	Center 6, 8 AM - 1:30
Week 12	M HR, Center 8	O/C/P	Indiv. Support	Center 8, 8 AM - 1:30
	T JT, Center 10	"	" "	Center 10, "
	W FP, Center 6	"	" "	Center 6, "
	Th AK, Center 1	"	" "	Center 1, "
	F HR, Center 8	"	" "	Center 8, "
Week 13	M JT, Center 10	O/C/P	Indiv. Support	Center 10, 8 AM - 1:30
	T FP, Center 6	"	" "	Center 6, "
	W AK, Center 1	"	" "	Center 1, "
	Th HR, Center 8	"	" "	Center 8, "
	F AK, Center 1	"	" "	Center 1, "
Week 14	1 Make-up on-site visits - M-F Telephone Conferences as needed			
	Th DC Teachers (4)	Participants Evaluation	Self Report Discussion	CSLC, 1:30 - 2:45
Week 15	DC Teachers	Feedback	"Showcase	CSLC, 1:30 - 2:45
	Th		Accomplishments."	

Any costs incurred were paid from the staff development budget. Any supplies the teachers needed to buy related to the practicum - perhaps books, supplementary supplies or batteries, were paid out of the petty cash funds teachers had available to them. ($10.00 a month).

Careful notes were kept of the practicum recording the ups and downs, the progress made, the difficulties encountered. Since so much of the work of the practicum was individual the records, reflected the development of individuals, with all their differences and unique ways of working.

CHAPTER V

RESULTS, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Results

The teachers of the Board of Education Day Care Program have long been concerned that the children in their classrooms consistently have difficulties in speech and language. This was confirmed by a survey designed to help the teachers pinpoint the problems. However, when a speech pathologist critically reviewed the results of the survey, it seemed to indicate that the Day Care teachers had little understanding of speech and language development. Neither did they know how to advance the language development of the children in their inner city classrooms.

The "working" language of the teachers was restricted largely to directives and commands. Compared to teachers in a similar day care program, the Board of Education teachers neither engaged children in extended conversations, nor used conversation to develop content. The usual pattern of exchange was for the teacher to initiate an exchange by asking a question, the child responded in one or two words, followed by a brief teacher-comment.

Conversation between teacher and child was usually limited to greetings upon arrival and during the day mechanical comments, such as

"That's nice,"

"Good for you,

and "I don't like what you're doing,"
were made as the teacher cruised around the room checking the various interest centers. If it rained and the group could not go outdoors, finger paint or bubble-blowing might be added to the day's activities. If a holiday was near, of course, there would be special activities: the dyeing of eggs or the making of valentines. Usually the events of the day were not discussed with the children. While their spontaneous comments or questions would be welcomed they would not be elaborated upon.

There was a clear need to help teachers make important changes in their teacher-talk, and to help them become self-critical and self-renewing. There was a parallel need for them to create propitious classroom settings where they and their language-learning children could develop increased skills.

Given the problem of the day care teachers' concerns, the fact of their language-impoverished classrooms and the paucity of teacher-child verbal interactions, the over-all goal of this practicum was to identify, develop and implement practices and elements of programming that enhanced the language environment. A first step was for each teacher to assess the verbal environment of her own classroom. The tool used was an adoption of "A Conversational Inventory." (Weiner, 1988, p. 9-11). It reflected important aspects of a positive language environment that teachers needed to be aware of. Since this is a self-report we can expect some

of the ratings to be quite optimistic, giving us a glimpse of the teacher's ideal self rather than her real teaching self. This seems to be the case with Teachers A, E, H and C. Teacher J, on the other hand, has a clear sense of her functioning. The program specialist (the writer) sees them in a different light. Thus, the substantial discrepencies between the ratings.

Table 5

Ratings of Day Care Teachers on Talking to Children Pretest Inventory Compared with Program Specialist's Ratings

Teachers*	A	B	C	E	F	G	H	I	J	Total
Self Report	61	52	64	60	54	63	62	67	49	532
P.S. Rating	36	41	44	38	39	50	40	55	45	388
Discrepancy	25	11	20	22	15	13	22	12	4	144

*Teacher D resigned before implementation of the practicum.

An interpretation of the ratings (see Appendix K) indicates that at the beginning of the practicum, only one teacher, I, had a classroom that was "conversational." However, she still needed to expand the opportunities for conversation to insure language learning.

The ratings of five of the teachers showed that they were aware of the importance of conversing with children, but neither used activities as a focus for conversation, nor used conversation as a vehicle for language development.

Three of the teachers, B, E and J, with scores below 58, had much work to do to make their classrooms language learning environments.

The ratings of the post test are displayed in Table 6.

Table 6

Ratings of Day Care Teachers on Talking to Children Inventory Post test Compared with Program Specialist's Ratings

Teachers	A	B	C	E	F	G	H	I	J	Total
Self Report	72	58	70	62	68	67	68	70	57	592
P.S. Ratings	60	55	66	52	58	63	54	65	56	529
Discrepancy	12	3	4	10	10	4	4	5	1	63

At the end of the practicum six teachers considered themselves as having integrated the practice of using conversation to advance language development; they evaluated their classrooms as positive settings for nurturing the language facility.

Only one teacher, J, felt that she had not yet integrated practices and procedures into her classroom activities that fostered language learning.

Two teachers were aware of the elements that created a language-rich classroom, but were still stretching themselves to incorporate these into their day-by-day teaching.

The teachers felt they had made considerable progress and they had. A close look at the inventory itself shows that

there had been change in significant areas. On the post test, teachers indicated that a majority of them (six or more)

- saw their role as a facilitator (9)
- encouraged conversations at mealtime (9)
- encouraged children to describe their drawings and constructions (8)
- invited children to explain their side of a situation before dealing with it (8)
- encouraged children to expand one-or-two word statements (7)
- responded thoughtfully to children's questions. (6)

There had been a reduction of activities that some of the teachers here-to-fore omitted from their programs: a reduction from 9 activities to 5. Also, the number of teachers who never presented these activities was also reduced in 4 of the 5 activities:

- share daily experiences with children.
  Pretest - 3; post test 1.
- ask children to "read" to them
  Pretest - 3; post test 1.
- invite children's participation in planning classroom activitie
  Pretest - 2; post test 1.
- Narrate what they are doing as they prepare materials, etc.
  Pretest - 1; post test 1.
- include informal puppet shows in the program
  Pretest - 4; post test 1

In the pretest 3 never had trips,
5 never included book making activities, but on the post test all (9) planned these activities some of the time. Teachers had made progress in improving the nature of their verbal interactions and in the planning of events that stimulate language.

Teachers had also become more accurate in assessing the language environment of their classrooms. The discrepancy between the program specialist's ratings and the teachers' had been reduced by 56% (from 144 points to 63). Since the goal was to reduce the discrepancy by at least 25% (from 144 to 108 points) the standard of achievement had been met.

However, even though there has been a reduction of the variance between the teachers' and the program specialist's ratings and there had been positive change in the direction toward development of language-rich classrooms, the program specialist's ratings suggest that there is a need for on-going effort:

- None of the teachers attained a rating indicating that she has achieved the quality of verbal interaction and enriched programming that supports language development.
- 5 out of 9 have not yet adequately integrated language building activities into their classrooms.
- 4, with scores below 58, still need close guidance and intensive support to enable them to further improve the language environment.

These teachers know it is futile to expect young children to learn by just sitting quietly listening to explanations of how things work or by coloring in a workbook. They give the child a chance to explore the games, toys and fascinating objects in the classroom, to observe, experiment, discover, to ask questions, to express his frustration or delight. They recognize the child's need to converse freely with his friends and to have numerous opportunities to talk with them.

These teachers, since they would be a vital influence in helping children acquire language, provide children with two major categories of verbal experience: labeling and mediating activities and events. They use resources of the classroom to create settings that stimulate and support language and learning. They select activities based on age-level interests and needs. They choose materials and equipment that encourage children's creative self-activity. In a classroom that enhances language and learning there are many first hand experiences, ample materials and varied equipment.

One of the aims of the practicum was for teachers to increase the variety and complexity of the play experiences planned for children. It was hoped that they would include in their daily programs a greater number of sensory-rich and language-stimulating experiences, activities such as cooking, gardening, trips and excursions, caring for pets, story telling, story making and story dramatizations, messing around with water, sand, dirt, paint and wood. Teachers were asked to record their enriched play experiences on a form, "Calendar of Events." (Appendix D). These were evaluated and tallied.* Only developmentally appropriate activities were included in the count shown in the following table.

---

*Eleven inappropriate activities were eliminated. E.g., teacher directed activity.

Table 7

Enriched Experiences
(As reported in "Calendar of Events")

Teachers	A	B	C	E	F	G	H	I	J	Avg.
Average # E.E. per mo. Pre-practicum	6	4	6	3	3	6	4	7	8	5
Average # E.E. per mo. Practicum	10	11	12	4	8	6	6	14	13	9
E.E. per wk: Practicum	2-3	2-3	3	1	2	1-2	1-2	3-4	3-4	2-3
% Increase	60%	175%	100%	33%	166%	0%	50%	100%	53%	82%

As the figures indicate 2 teachers fell below the 50% standard of improvement, G with no increase in the number of enriched activities and E with a 33% increase.

Although H shows a 50% increase, she is actually offering only one or two enriched experiences, the same number as G, who shows no improvement.

B and F made impressive gains, 175% and 166% respectively. From having one (or less) enriched activities a week they added 2 to 3 more complex play activities a week to their basic activities. Perhaps, to consider the number of enriched experiences added to the program is a better way of looking at these figures.

The teachers themselves set a goal of 3 enriched experiences to be included in their program plans each week. From

this vantage,

4 (E,F,G,H) fell below this standard and

5 (A,B,C,I & J) met it.

Typically, the teachers had great difficulty in planning varied, relevant play experiences as will be seen later when we review the findings on internalization of skills and behavior. Nevertheless, there are indications of growing confidence. The form, "Calendar of Events" does not capture the telling details of these many exciting, worthwhile events. For example, E. makes this simple notation: Played color lotto. But, in the writer's journal the event is described as follows:

> 7/13 Tony sat a long time on the teacher's lap, nestling against her shoulder, while she played color lotto (a game she had made.) Six children were playing the game, and at one point a child gleefully shouted that he had the "lello" space, the color just called.
>
> Teacher: I don't want no lello.
> I want yellow, yellow.
>
> Child (with a lilt): Yellow? Yellow?
>
> The other children picked it up, chanting, varying the tone, volume and rhythm. High and low, soft and loud, fast and slow. The teacher laughed with delight. And the children continued their verbal play with much pleasure now varying the words as well as the rhythm and sound; yellow, mellow, bellow, fellow, jello, wellow, until they were all laughing.

Another example F jots down: Read <u>The History of Flight</u>, a new book. From the writer's journal these notes:

> 8/14 Teacher introduced a new book to the children, a lovely, beautifully made, intricate pop-up book. She told them she noticed they had been building and rebuilding many kinds of planes when they made their airport and space stastation over the last few days in the

> outdoor play yard. She showed the book slowly and carefully to the five, eager, interested children, allowing time for them to examine each pop-up. The children listen to the narrative, attentively. Tia says solemly, "O teacher, that's a b-a-d, b-a-a-d, b-a-a-a-d book." The teacher smiles, "I thought you would like it. I knew you would appreciate it.

Some experiences are not as rewarding nor as reinforcing.

> 7/15 H. assembles the children for a story, all 16 of them. "Today," she says, "I want you to read the story to me." The story is Corduroy, a story well known to the children. "I'll turn the pages. You raise your hand if you want to 'read' that page." Only a few are interested. The rest find their own amusements: Mia and Ray play peek-a-boo. Rickie and Robbie tussle. Ellie and Sheene and Peggy talk to each other. Markus spins on his bottom. Lonnie climbs into the teacher's lap. H. catches the observer's eye, who is setting the table for lunch with 3 of the children, "I'll never try that again!," she says.

The teachers were urged to observe and record their experiences and reflect upon them. They were encouraged to regard even their less successful experiences as informative and as part of creative teaching. Sharing their experiences among each other at group meeting was an excellent way to help each other. These strategies, techniques and bits of knowledge were often incorporated into teaching repertoires.

Teachers were expected and encouraged to develop a daily program where creative, first hand, interesting activities furthered children's language and learning. Teachers worked toward accomplishing this goal by using appropriate

language techniques in suitable contexts. The "Semantic Differential Scale" (Table 8) measures these aspects of teacher activity.

The projected standard of achievement was a score of 75%, and all but two of the teachers attained this level. The results follow: teachers are ranked from highest to lowest as determined by their scores; the information is displayed to show the spread of the scores from the two very high scores to the one lowest, the rest clustering in the middle.

Table 8

Semantic Differential Scale
Scores and Rankings

1.	A (97.7%)	3.	G (86.8%)	7.	J (78.8%)	9.	E (57.4%)*
2.	I (93.1%)	4.	H (83.7%)	8.	B (73.4%)		
		5.	C (82.2%)				
		6.	F(82.0%				

Average Score: 81.6%

*Did not meet goal.

The scores of individuals are not surprising; they appear to be consistent with other findings: E and B lagging behind the others and I and sometimes A are high scorers. Explanations, undoubtedly, can be found in the ideas, values, aspirations and native ability that underlie their work. E and B are interesting from this vantage. E, near the end of her career as a

caregiver, nevertheless, struggles to understand terms, meanings and procedures and willingly attempts to implement newly acquired knowledge. But, she flounders and old habit systems take over.

B, on the other hand, is the youngest, and the one with the quickest mind, but she resists every change. Her communication style is aloof, terse, and often she speaks very rapidly.

A and I, the high scorers, are working enthusiastically on their Child Development Associate Certifications. They have a new sense of purpose and are stimulated and challenged by new information to a greater degree than the other teachers.

The uniqueness of each of the teachers is revealed in the combinations of their responses to the questions "How do you feel about conversing with children in centain contexts?" and "How confident are you in using given language techniques?" Their answers to both aspects follow. The extremes - most confident, least confident - are presented in the matrix below to give a sharp picture of what the teachers have accomplished and what still needs to be done on the long road to mastery.

Table 9

Contexts								
A	B	C	E	F	G	H	I	J
Sm. Group* Project +Picture Book Neigh-borhood Walk*	Pic-Book	Toy Tele.	Out-doors.	Pic-ture Book	Plant-ing a Garden	Field Trips	Toy Tele.	Small Group Project
Toy -Tele.	Toy Tele.	Pic-ture Book	Sm. Group Proj.	Sm. Group Proj.	Toy Tele.	Meal* Times Toy* Tele.	Meal Times	Meal Times

*Tie

It is interesting that not one of the teachers felt positive about meal times as a focus for conversation. In fact, 3 of the 9 indicated that meal time is an activity they feel least confident about as a context for stimulating conversation. This probably reflects their feeling that talking with the children may lead to a loss of control. (An echo of the attitude that meal time is not a social activity? E.g., "Eat, don't talk.")

E's choice of "Outdoors" is puzzling, because all our records show that there is little opportunity for the teacher to converse when they and the children are outdoors.

Using the toy telephone to stimulate conversation and meal time as "time for teachers and children to talk" seems to be difficult for teachers to manage or to capitalize upon even though in the in-service sessions, the hows and whys of talking with children during these two events were emphasized.

It would have been useful to have had this information earlier in the implementation phase. The Semantic Differential Scale seems to be a good tool to pin-point problem areas.

Table 10

Techniques								
A	B	C	E	F	G	H	I	J
All +Technique	Parallel* Talk Expansions*	Expansions* Expressive*	Parallel Talk	Expansions* Representative	Expressive	Expansion	Representative	Representative* Expressive
-None	Expres-	Parellel Talk	Representative* Expressive	Expressive	Representative	Parellel Talk	Parellel Talk	Parellel Talk* Expansions*

*Tie

No one mentioned divergent questions as being easy for her to use; neither did anyone indicate it was difficult. More felt confident about expansions, expressive statements and representative statements. But, four have difficulty with parallel talk. When we examine the verbal interactions of this group of day care teachers the greater proportion of their verbalizations are representative statements. So it is intriguing that only four of the nine say that the technique they feel the most confident of is making representative statements or posing questions. But, five indicate that expansions of what the child has said is a technique they use confidently. This in itself is a positive sign. Also, the records indicate that teachers use very few statements to children that convey feelings (expressive statements), yet four of the teachers feel confident about using the technique,

three feel least confident. This awareness may have the effect of teachers' increased use of expressive statements. Again, the "Semantic Differential Scale" information that is helpful for supervisors or other helping persons to guide the day care teacher in improving the verbal environment of the classroom.

From study and experience we know that children's language flourishes in the classroom if the environment is stimulating and children are encouraged to explore, experiment and talk freely with the other children. Not to be overlooked nor underestimated is the significant contribution the teacher makes to the fostering of children's language. Teacher's verbalization have a crucial impact, and the observation, recording and analysis of her verbal behavior was an important part of the practicum. Observation 1 provided the baseline data:

Table 11

Observation 1 - Baseline Data: Verbal Function

Teacher	A	B	C	E	F	G	H	I	J	Total	Average
Social Statement	0	0	1	1	3	2	4	0	4	15	1.6
Representative	17	14	29	10	11	24	25	27	23	180	20.0
Expressive	3	1	4	0	3	0	6	2	4	23	2.55
Control	1	12	1	1	5	10	1	2	0	33	3.66
Total	21	27	35	12	22	36	36	31	31	251	27.88

The goal was to increase the total number of verbal interactions by 15%; that is, 28 interactions to 32,

to increase social statements by 3%, from 2 to 2.06,

to increase representational statements by 12%, from 20 to 23,

to increase expressive statements by 3%, from 3 to 3.09 and

to decrease control statements by 1%, from 4 to 3.

The averages of the verbal functions the four Observations (2 through 5) are as follows:

Table 12

Averages, Observations 2-5: Verbal Functions

Teacher	A	B	C	E	F	G	H	I	J	Total	Ave.
Social State-ment	4.5	.75	1.75	.25	3.5	3.5	8.0	2.5	4.25	29.0	3.22
Repre-sentative	39.75	30.0	39.5	26.25	41.5	41.75	38.0	38.75	39.0	334.5	37.16
Expres-sive	2.0	1.0	1.5	2.5	4.75	2.5	4.0	2.75	3.25	24.25	2.69
Contl.	1.75	3.5	3.5	3.75	2.5	5.25	4.25	5.0	4.0	33.5	3.72
Total	48.0	35.25	46.25	32.75	52.25	53.0	54.25	49.0	50.0	421.25	46.8

From baseline data to data showing the average of Observations 2 to 5, the average gains are:

The total number of verbal interactions was increased by 68%,

Social statements were increased by 50%,

Representative statements were increase by 85%,

Expressive statements showed no change and

Control statements showed a slight increase instead of a decrease.

The standard of achievement was met in the total number of interactions and in the information-giving statements (representative statements), the gains being considerably larger than those projected. (The conservative projections were made on the basis of this group's past history of small learning increments.) Even so, the standard was not met in the expressive and control functions. Although there was impressive change in teacher interaction and teacher talk there was little nurturing language. And, as teachers talked more with children they seemed to feel a need for more control.

The data also shows that there is a wide variation among the individual teachers. Ranking them on the basis of verbal interactions, from highest to lowest we find:

1. H (54)	5. I (49)	8. B (35)
2. G (53)	6. A (48)	9. E (32)
3. F (52)	7. C (46)	
4. J (50)		

More fall in the upper range, but E and B are again in the lower end of the ranking of the teachers.

It is informative to compare the "best" observation (ie, the observation with the highest number of verbal interactions) with the baseline data as well as the base line date with the "poorest" observation, the observation with the fewest verbal interactions.

Table 13

Verbal Interactions: Baseline Data Compared to "Best" Observation

Teacher	A	B	C	E	F	G	H	I	J	Average
Baseline	21	27	35	12	22	36	36	31	31	28
Best of 4 Obs. (2-5)	57	48	58	38	62	69	61	56	62	57
Improvement %	171%	78%	66%	217%	182%	92%	69%	81%	100%	106%

The teachers who made the greatest improvement were obviously the ones who had to make the most improvement. All of them demonstrated that they have the capacity to improve performance.

Table 14

Verbal Interactions: Baseline Data Compared to Poorest" Observation

Teacher	A	B	C	E	F	G	H	I	J
Baseline	21	27	35	12	22	36	36	31	31
Poorest Observed	19	28	30	28	40	36	25	31	35
Differential from Baseline	-10%	4%	-14%	133%	82%	0	-31%	0	13%

At first glance, these figures are disturbing because of the large discrepancies between the "poorest" observation compared with the baseline and "best" observation. While variations are expected as teachers attempt to integrate newly acquired skills, this wide variation may indicate that teachers do not have a firm grasp on these skills.

However, context also is a factor in the amount of verbal interaction. Three of the teachers chosen at random (C, F, H) were engaged in the following activities when Observation 1 (Baseline) and the "Best," "Poorest" observations were made.

Table 15

Contexts

	C	F	H
Baseline Observation	Small Group: Table Painting.	Examining a feather	Circulating
"Best"	Writing down children's stories suggested by drawings.	Small group - Creating a design with tiles.	Circulating
"Poorest"	Outdoors	Small group - collage	Observing play at the water table.

In the observations of C, it would be expected that the story dictation activity would generate more conversation than outdoors where the activity is more diffused, and children are in motion. For F, a small group activity can either be used to encourage much conversation or little conversation. The variable may include the children involved, the tenor of the day or the mood of the teacher. Generally, when a teacher is circu-

lating around the room there are minimum of conversations. However, H "circulated" with a difference: she stopped at each interest center and talked at length with children about their activities.

The activities that stimulate the most language, as indicated by the data, are activities where teachers and children are doing and making things together: fixing a toy, making lemonade, mixing paints or dough, discussing their drawings. Mealtimes are particularly good settings for verbal interaction. Poor ones are transitions, play, outdoors and when the teacher is circulating. An obstacle in sustaining a conversation is not that the teacher lacks the technique, but that she does not have enough information to add to the matter under consideration. For example, to maintain the flow of conversation about magnets, feathers, rabbits, robins, a praying mantis - all objects of children's attention in the course of the practicum - teachers have to gather information to further conversation.

The graph which follows is another way to look at the variations individual teachers showed from observation to observation.

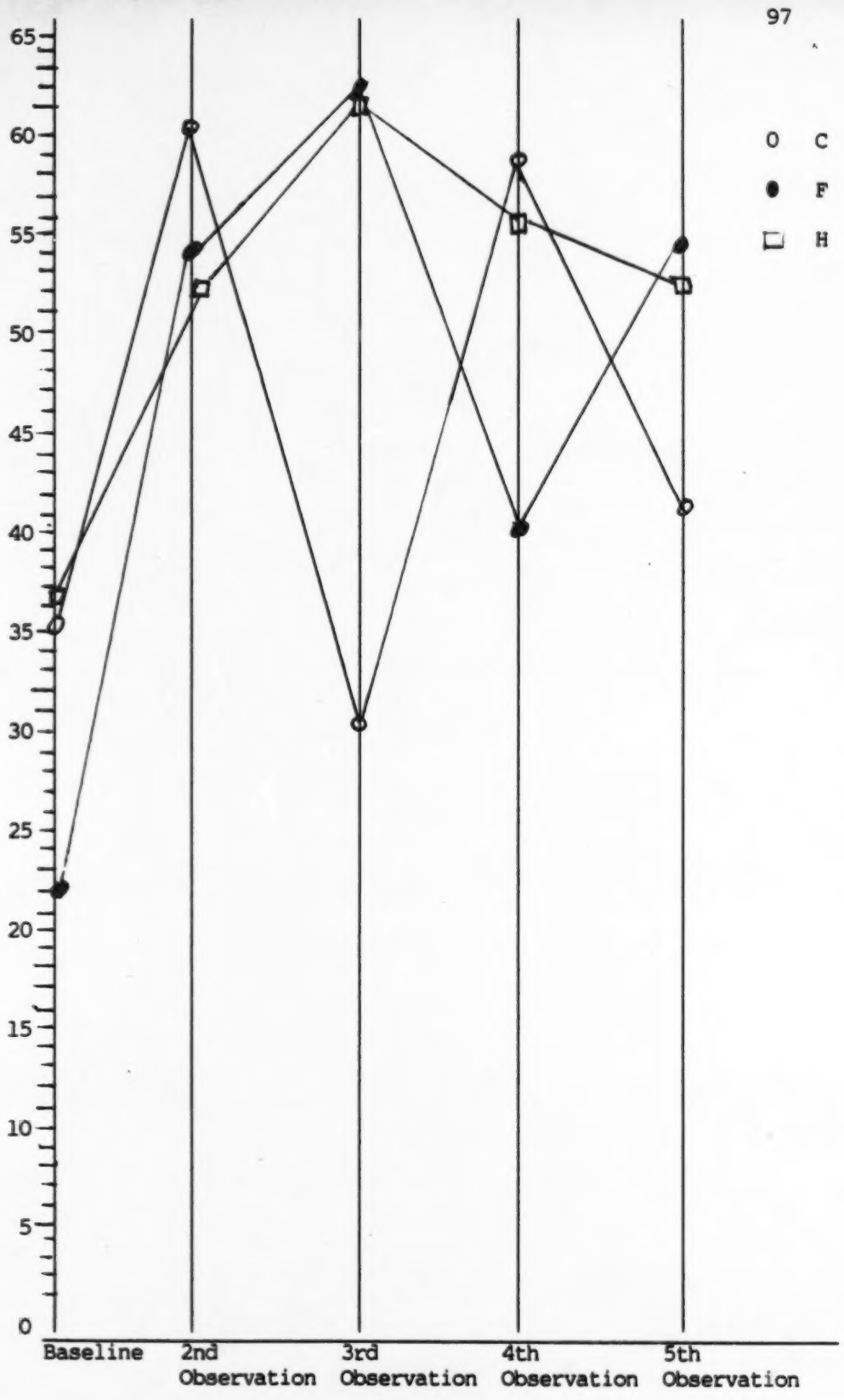


Figure 3 Verbal Interactions, C,F,H.

Table 16

Contexts: Observations 1-5

Observation (Baseline) Time: Approx. 9:15-9:30		C	F	H
	1	Small Group: Table Painting	Examing a Feather- 2 Children	Circulating
	2	Writing down* stories suggested by children's drawings.	Mixing of Finger paint - 3 children.	Observing* play at water table.
	3	Outdoors+	Small Groups: Creating designs with tiles.	Circulating*
	4	Breakfast table.	Collage -+ Small Group.	Breakfast table.
	5	Breakfast table.	Conversation around drawings.	Table games.

*"Best" Observation, i.e. most verbal interactions.
+"Poorest" Observation, i.e. least verbal interactions

The first observation in the implementation of the practicum (Observation 2) shows a steep increase in verbal interactions from the baseline observation; participants are "showcasing" what they have recently learned. F and H continue to increase their interactions on the second and third observations, demonstrating the kind of gains hoped for. Both lose ground on the fourth observation, F following more sharply than H. Both recover and consolidate their gains by the fifth observation. C, on the other hand, shows sharper ups and downs. She needs to work for more consistency. All need to concentrate on steady, consistent improvement. (Note: improvement here is equated with an

increase in verbal interactions with a higher proportion of representational statements to control statements - (predicated on McCartney's findings.) Table 16 charts the activities observed, and is a variable that may account for differences in the number of verbal interactions. Note that all observations were done at approximately the same time (9:15 AM) and in the same week (eg all Observation 2's were done in same week, week 2, Observation 3 in week 3, etc.) Teacher style is also a variable that will be touched on briefly in the discussion of internalizing new practices.

Since the recording of conversations was seen as an effective way for teachers to change verbal style, the day care teachers were urged to keep track of their conversations with the children. (Wood & Wood, 1983, Kostelnick et al., 1988). Only four of the teachers did this regularly (A, B, F and J), and of these four only A recorded at length, with full enough notes to give a flavor of the cynamics and permit analysis.

A's records point to the change that can take place. Over a seven week period following a low point of 6 recorded conversations in week 2, there was a steady increase with a high point of 16 (week 5) and leveling off to 12 (weeks 6 and 7). Obviously, this teacher enjoyed children's conversations and found satisfaction in recording them and had the skills to do so.

In addition to the number of conversations there was a dramatic growth in the number of turns: the conversations recorded at first were "very brief," no more than 2 or 3

turns. The number of turns built up quickly to four or five turns (week 2) and by week 5 there were 8 and more turns to the conversations.

Over the seven week period the teacher also improved her method of recording: she began writing a brief summary, eg, "Camella talked of being filthy rich." But by week 3 she started to include excerpts:

Child 1: We went on a big bus yesterday.

Teacher: A big bus?

Child 1: On a big bus to see Snow White. They had a witch. Poison apple, too.

Teacher: Scary, huh?

Child 2: Yeah! The witch gived Snow White the apple, the poison apple.

Teacher: What happens then?

Child 1: The prince came and they got married.

Child 2: Snow White had a white dress.

Teacher: I think I know this story. I think I remember dwarfs in this fairy tale. Were there dwarfs?

Child 1: Wait, wait. Let me tell you the whole thing...

Here the teacher is listening to the children, asking for more and more details, but not controlling the content and so the flow of conversation is maintained. And the children feel successful and are eager to continue relating the story.

From week 4 on the teacher analyzed the conversations (as well as including excerpts), listing the techniques she was using and commenting on the meanings in the conversation.

The topics of the conversation are informative and the teacher became increasingly aware of how the conversations reflected children's interests and their deep concerns. The conversations she recorded over the seven weeks could be catergorized into the -

Three A's: Accomplishments - (I can climb the big jungle gym.)
Anxieties - (Teacher, last night I dream my face was green.)
Aspirations - (I might be getting a dog.)

and into the Three B's" Babies (Aunt Lucy's baby spit up.)
Birthdays (I'm getting four candles for my birthday cake), and
Mother's Boyfriends (My mother has a new boyfriend and an ex-boyfriend.)

The project "Writing a Guideline," was an experience in collaborative learning. Although not completed, it was a worthwhile task. The goal to develop a useful document was not attained because three two-hour sessions proved to be insufficient time. These teachers as learners needed more time

to explore their shared knowledge, their common language. However, the task generated enthusiasm, encouraged a high level of interest and promoted positive attitudes.

The standard of achievement (score of 72) was not met. The raw notes of the three sessions were examined and scored on the 16 point scale (Appendix G) to evaluate the level of understanding of the six significant terms:

1. Interaction - 9 points: Intermediate Grasp of Concept
2. Expansion - 4 points: Vague Understanding
3. Modeling - 16 points: Comprehension
4. Expressive/ receptive language 0 points: Comprehension (does not appear)
5. Scaffold 12 points: Comprehension

Total points: 57

The teachers were beginning to synthesize what they knew about "Fostering Oral Competency" (working title of the guideline) and starting to learn problem solving skills. Possibly three more sessions would have enabled them to complete the task.

The practicum participants used self-contracts to aid them in building discourse skills. They selected skills to concentrate on, thoughtfully, weighing and considering different skills before making a decision. The skills selected ranged from conversing with individual children to planning more shared activities to listening patiently to two very talkative children to explaining and describing more. All,

except B, were intrigued with the self-contract concept; B asked, "Is this necessary?" Nevertheless, she filled out a contract, noting, "It's difficult to change techniques, to break habits...It takes time to change." All asked to extend the contracts in order to accomplish their goals.

Four (A,G,I & J) felt they had "greatly fulfilled" their goals.

One (C) said she had "almost" greatly fulfilled it.

Three (E,F,H) said they had "adequately fulfilled" their contracts.

One (B) said she had "somewhat" fulfilled the contract, writing that she had difficulty remembering to read to individual children.

The standard of achievement was met as more than 6 adequately or greatly fulfilled their goals. The group suggested that the self-contract and self-evaluation techniques were useful techniques and should be used with the supporting staff - the assistant group leaders and aides. They also suggested that the forms be simplified.

Although the Participants Evaluation (Appendix I) is primarily an open-ended measure, scores were derived from rating questions 1 and 6 and 4 and 5. The scores are as follows:

1.	G	9.7	(4.	E		8. I	7.8
2.	A	9.5	(		8.7	9. J	7.5
3.	B	9.2	(5.	H			
			6.	F	8.5		
			7.	C	8.2		

The standard of achievement was met since all participants had scores of 7 or better.

Comments from C, F and H, randomly selected teachers, written in response to the last question, give an indication of how they felt about the "project":

C - I enjoyed the time together and you were helpful and gave me some feedback....I have become very aware of how important language can be to growing children and how you can give them so much information.

F - The staff has also improved. I have learned to have longer conversations. I hope I have more skills and know more.

H - At first I was apprehensive, later more relaxed. I began to appreciate its value and gain from the experience.
The project made me feel more confident in my ability to manage program and interact with children. I appreciate the positive way in which I received feedback and criticism.

From the scores of the Participants Evaluation and the comments it would appear that the practicum was a success. The pre-practicum workshops and activities introduced the language skills to be learned and implemented; the practicum focused on these skills through the strategy of on-site sup-

port; the post-practicum task now is to maintain or improve the skills that foster language development. Much had been gained but more effort is needed.

To bring this to their awareness each group leader (day care teacher) was asked to rank 17 language skills or techniques according to

1. those easy to integrate into their teaching style,
2. those more difficult to integrate,
3. those most difficult.

As a group they were reluctant to list any skills as difficult, but upon discussion the concensus was that the skills easy to integrate into their teaching style are these two:

1. the verbal functions and
2. listening to children,

and the most difficult to integrate are

1. to narrate children's activity,
2. to provide enriched experiences,
3. to discuss things with children,
4. to extend conversations using a variety of communication techniques.

As C remarked, "I know all this, but I don't know it in my bones yet."

The essential goal of the practicum was to enrich the language of the day care classroom by improving the teachers' verbal interactions. This involved, in effect, changing the teacher's role from interviewer to resource, expanding her repertoire of techniques and expecting her to integrate these

into her teaching style. Internalizing newly acquired skills and knowledge, because of teaching style variables, is, of course, quite difficult. The teachers who are reticent, laconic or even inarticulate, especially, have to work hard at learning and implementing interactional skills. But over time, with encouragement, it is possible. Consider what A writes,

> "I've always been an observer and not much of a talker.....I've learned the importance of talking to children and the way I respond (makes a difference). The staff's interactions with children have also improved because I can model the type of interactions I wish for them to have with children."

This change in the assistant and aides was a remarkable and unexpected result which the teachers attributed to "modeling" and "coaching." With two and sometimes three adults relating to children in a positive way, the classrooms became vital settings for learning. Another unexpected result was the notable increase of children's play with language. Sound play, nonsense rhymes, fun with language was as satisfying to the children as having built a complicated structure of planks and boards or painted and intricate design with bright colors.

There was still another outcome: teachers came to appreciate the information and insights that can be gained when observations are recorded regularly. They learned that even

in a busy classroom it is possible to keep simple, but important records. The writer functioning as a participant-observer kept a check-list of classroom activities and wrote anecdotal notes, focusing on particular children, as requested by the teacher. These check-lists and vignettes were shared and discussed and were given to the teacher to become part of her professional log. In the conference where classroom events were discussed by two colleagues - the teacher and the participant-observer - the conference itself made a signal contribution to the practicum experience.

But there are many unanswered questions. Among them: What is the optimum number of verbal interactions? If 22 are too few, are 62 too many? While the practicum did not evaluate the content of the verbal interactions this is a valid concern. What strategies will enhance the quality of what the teachers say and do? How can the affected aspects of teachers' language be enhanced? And how do we help them to hear the underlying questions in a child's conversation?

Conclusions

This practicum demonstrates that teachers can change and grow. Teachers can organize the resources of the classroom, expand their repertoire of verbal techniques and increase the opportunities to use language purposefully and effectively.

The amount of change is unique to each teacher, related to her level of commitment and level of abstraction. Any change is dependent upon the presence of a significant other

in a nurturing and risk-free relationship. And change occurs over time: eight months to present foundational learnings was not too much time; fifteen weeks was not enough time to internalize all the skills.

In helping teachers to develop their language skills planning needs to be on-going and each plan unique, based on observed and expressed needs. It was important, too, to monitor and document progress and to review information. The conference was crucial to continued development of the teacher's skills and understandings. In many ways learning was reciprocal.

Recommendations

To maintain progress and further refine skills enabling supervision and in-service training are essential, a plan of supervision and an in-service program that begins with the individual teacher.

Over-learning seems to be indicated, if pseudo-learning is to be avoided; continuing training is also necessary.

It seems prudent to continue some of the activities used in the practicum, eg.,

- tape recorder as an observational tool,
- participant-observation,
- recording of children's conversations,
- self-contracts,
- collaborative learning experiences.

In this way a value would be placed on familiar methods, and it would be possible to capitalize on benefits accruing to their further use.

A "Follow-Through" program with an array of effective approaches - mini-courses, small group projects, conferences, exchange visits - would be challenging and stimulate further learning.

The learning problems and the variations in rate and depth of assimilating new knowledge may be peculiar to this particular group of teachers. However, it would be instructive to replicate features of the practicum with other groups of day care teachers to compare the strategies and effects.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX A

SPEECH AND LANGUAGE QUESTIONAIRE

SPEECH AND LANGUAGE QUESTIONNAIRE

Please take a careful look at your children to determine which ones fall into any of the following categories. This information will help us to identify those children who may have communication problems.

1. Which children seldom seem to listen at story time?

2. Which children seldom, if ever, answer questions put to the group about stories or things that have happened?

3. Which children talk very little and don't use sentences when they do or have trouble getting words in the right place? Perhaps they use a great deal of gesture or body language and seldom put more than two words together.

4. Which children regularly have difficulty following directions?

5. Which children are extremely difficult to understand when they talk?

6. Can an unfamiliar person understand the child's speech?

7. Which children are afraid to talk?

8. Which children often repeat sounds or words, or have trouble getting words out?

9. Which children say, "What, What, or Huh, huh?" all the time?

10. Which children have hoarse voices most of the time?

11. Which children appear not to understand what the teachers say to them? These are children about whom we often are tempted to say, "He only listens when he wants to," or "he's just tuning us out."

12. Which children are mouth breathers?

13. Which children give indications that they may not really hear what we say?

14. Which children seem to have a cold most of the time?

CHILD'S NAME_____

CENTER_____

CHECK APPROPRIATE STATEMENT OR STATEMENTS (ABOVE) (From 1 - 14.)

Appendix B
Speech and Language Survey Results

Question	Centers A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J	Totals
1.	3	6	4	3	-	3	6	7	2	3	37
2.	5	8	6	1	1	2	6	-	5	-	34
3.	0	5	7	-	4	-	1	1	2	-	20
4.	5	8	9	1	1	-	6	7	3	-	40
5.	1	2	5	2	1	-	4	1	2	0	18
6.	1	2	1	2	2	-	4	1	2	-	15
7.	-	5	3	1	4	2	-	-	2	2	19
8.	2	1	4	2	-	-	1	-	-	0	10
9.	1	2	4	2	-	1	2	2	1	0	15
10.	0	1	2	2	-	-	-	-	1	0	6
11.	0	1	4	2	-	-	2	-	0	?	9
12.	2	9	6	2	-	1	8	1	10+	-	39=
13.	0	1	4	3	-	-	-	-	0	0	8
14.	5	4	3	3	-	4	4	3	5	1	32
											202 Total

APPENDIX C

TALKING TO CHILDREN: AN INVENTORY

This inventory will help you evaluate your classroom from the standpoint of its oral language. Rate each question according to this scale:

1 = None of the time

2 - Some of the time

3 = Most of the time

1. At lunch time do you engage in conversation at the table?

_____

2. Do you ask individual children to tell you about their experiences?

_____

3. Do you <u>share</u> your daily experiences with the children?

_____

4. Do you avoid telling children to stop talking so much?

_____

5. Do you read aloud to the children in small groups as well as to one child

_____

6. Do you ask them to "read" to you?

_____

7. When you read to a child do you engage him in conversation about the word and pictures and about ideas suggested by the story?

_____

8. Do you invite children's opinions about clothing, a new activity, a snack or food item? etc.

_____

9. When children ask questions do you respond thoughtfully and invite furthe questions?

_____

10. Do you encourage children to expand one-or-two word statements in respons to questions?

_____

11. When children argue do you try to get them to explain the problem clearly and to solve it by talking?

_____

12. When you provide choices for children do you encourage them to explain their reasons for the choice?

_____

13. In planning classroom events do you invite children's participation in determing activities relevant to the occasion?

_____

14. When you are preparing materials in the classroom (eg., mixing paint, gathering ingredients for a cooking experience, setting up the house gym) do you describe what you are doing?

_____

15. When you are invited to, do you accept a role in a dramatic play enactment?

_____

16. Do you see your role as a guide or facilitation rather than a teacher of ABC's and Numbers?

_____

17. Are children encouraged to explain or describe the pictures they draw or the things they construct?

_____

18. Do you invite a child to explain his wrong doing before you deal with it?

_____

19. Do you play verbal word games, tell riddles, use nonsense words, rhymes, etc.?

_____

20. Do you name and identify objects or concepts that are unfamiliar?

_____

21. Do you include varied experiences in your program to stimulate language development such as story telling?

_____

22. Trips?_____ 23. Informal puppet shows?_____

24. The making of books where you record children's own stories?_____

25. As children work or play do you describe what they are doing?_____

Score: Number-Scored 1_____ x 1 = _____
Number-Scored 2_____ x 2 = _____
Number-Scored 3_____ x 3 = _____

Total_____

* Adapted from
Weiner, H.S. (1988). Talk with your child. New York, Viking, p.9-11

CENTER_____

DAY CARE PROGRAM
CALENDER OF EVENTS

MONTH OF_____

(Enter stories read, excursions, special activities-eg.cooking, planting, shopping

MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY
-				

APPENDIX D
EVENT CALENDAR

APPENDIX E

VERBAL FUNCTIONS

Name_____ Date_____ Time: From_____ To_____
Center_____ Event (Circle) Meal Time
Small Group Program
Picture Book Reading (1-1) or 1 to a few)
Other
Children Involved: (Name)

Directions: Listen to your Tape.
Code each of your statements; that is, statement by statement, by statement, decide which category it belongs in.
Put a is the appropriate column.

Verbal Functions

Context	Topic	Social	Representative	Expressive	Control	Remarks
1.						
2.						
3.						
4.						
5.						
6.						
7.						
8.						
9.						
10.						
11.						
12.						
13.						

Key: Social: Talking to invite, engage. E.g., "Would you like to join us?
Representative: Talking to inform. E.g., "Roots grow down; stalk grow up."
Expressive: Talking to convey feelings. E.G., "Such bright colors! They make me feel cheerful."
Control: Talking to limit, prevent. E.g., "I want you to stop...."

APPENDIX F

Name Date
Center

Communication Contexts and Techniques

How do you feel about conversing with children in the following situations? Place an X on one of the seven lines between each pair of words.

Meal Times

Boring	___	___	___	___	___	___	___	Interesting
Uninformative	___	___	___	___	___	___	___	Informative
Irrelevant	___	___	___	___	___	___	___	Relevant
Tense	___	___	___	___	___	___	___	Relaxed
Worthless	___	___	___	___	___	___	___	Valuable

Small Group Project

Boring	___	___	___	___	___	___	___	Interesting
Uninformative	___	___	___	___	___	___	___	Informative
Irrevevant	___	___	___	___	___	___	___	Relevant
Tense	___	___	___	___	___	___	___	Relaxed
Worthless	___	___	___	___	___	___	___	Valuable

Picture Book Reading

Boring	___	___	___	___	___	___	___	Interesting
Uninformative	___	___	___	___	___	___	___	Informative
Irrelevant	___	___	___	___	___	___	___	Relevant
Tense	___	___	___	___	___	___	___	Relaxed
Worthless	___	___	___	___	___	___	___	Valuable

Toy Telephone Conversation

Boring	___	___	___	___	___	___	___	Interesting
Uninformative	___	___	___	___	___	___	___	Informative
Irrelevant	___	___	___	___	___	___	___	Relevant
Tense	___	___	___	___	___	___	___	Relaxed
Worthless	___	___	___	___	___	___	___	Valuable

Other (fill in situation activity)

Boring	___	___	___	___	___	___	___	Interesting
Uninformative	___	___	___	___	___	___	___	Informative
Irrelevant	___	___	___	___	___	___	___	Relevant
Tense	___	___	___	___	___	___	___	Relaxed
Worthless	___	___	___	___	___	___	___	Valuable

How do you feel about using the following techniques? Place an X on one of the seven lines between each pair of words.

Parallel Talk

Bad	___	___	___	___	___	___	___	Good
Confused	___	___	___	___	___	___	___	Clear
Purposeless	___	___	___	___	___	___	___	Purposeful
Tense	___	___	___	___	___	___	___	Relaxed
Incompetent	___	___	___	___	___	___	___	Competent

Expansions

Bad	___	___	___	___	___	___	___	Good
Confused	___	___	___	___	___	___	___	Clear
Purposeless	___	___	___	___	___	___	___	Purposeful
Tense	___	___	___	___	___	___	___	Relaxed
Incompetent	___	___	___	___	___	___	___	Competent

Divergent Questions

Bad	___	___	___	___	___	___	___	Good
Confused	___	___	___	___	___	___	___	Clear
Purposeless	___	___	___	___	___	___	___	Purposeful
Tense	___	___	___	___	___	___	___	Relaxed
Incompetent	___	___	___	___	___	___	___	Competent

Representational Utterances

Bad	___	___	___	___	___	___	___	Good
Confused	___	___	___	___	___	___	___	Clear
Purposeless	___	___	___	___	___	___	___	Purposeful
Tense	___	___	___	___	___	___	___	Relaxed
Incompetent	___	___	___	___	___	___	___	Competent

Expressive Utterances

Bad	___	___	___	___	___	___	___	Good
Confused	___	___	___	___	___	___	___	Clear
Purposeless	___	___	___	___	___	___	___	Purposeful
Tense	___	___	___	___	___	___	___	Relaxed
Incompetent	___	___	___	___	___	___	___	Competent

APPENDIX G

Concept Development Continum & Categories*

Vague/No Concept	General Awareness of Concept: Anecdotes and Analogies from	Intermediate Grasp of Concept	Comprehension of Concept
1. Absent	5. Prior Experience	9. Meaning of term paraphrased.	13. Term used & paraphrased.
2. Irrelevant use	6. Everyday experiences.	10. Term used; expression & appropriate meaning attempted.	14. Analogy used that incorporates term.
3. Confused use.	7. Classroom experiences.	11. Term used in what seems to be an appropriate context.	15. Synonym used.
4. Specialized term used, but inappropriately.	8. Shared prior group experiences.	12. Term used and example given.	16. Specialized vocabulary used and applied in new situation.

Concepts - Specialized Terms:

1. Interaction
2. Expansion
3. Modeling
4. Expressive/receptive language
5. Scaffold
6. Firsthand experiences

*Adapted from Bayer, A.S. (1986). A Case Study: Teachers learning and language development. Journal of Research and Development in Education. 19, 19-28.

APPENDIX H

SELF CONTRACT

SELF CONTRACT EVALUATION

Self-contract:

Improving the Language Environment of My Classroom

During the next 2 weeks I agree to increase/decrease (circle one) my use of _____(specify negative/positive practices) from _____(specify amt.) to _____ during _____(specify times/activity).

My ultimate goal regarding the use of _____ is _____ (specify number/times/activity. To accomplish my goal of a more positive language environment I agree to increase my observation of _____ and use of _____ (specify techniques or activities) and decrease _____.

In addition, I agree to ask the support and cooperation of _____(name person(s).

I anticipate the following difficult situations:

_____

_____

During moments of discouragement I will remind myself that _____

_____

Upon successfully keeping to my self-contract I will reward myself by _____

_____

Signed _____ Date _____

Self-Contract Evaluation

Regarding implementation of _____

My agreement was _____
Implementation skills

During a two week period I _____ my contract
(see 1-10 below)

10	8	5	3	1
greatly fulfilled	adequately fulfilled	somewhat fulfilled	barely fulfilled	did not fulfill

Major difficulty:

Major accomplishment:

How I plan to overcome future difficulty regarding implementation of _____

_____

_____

Appendix I

Day Care Language Improvement Project
Participant Evaluation

Did you enjoy our work together these past few months?

1. Circle one 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
Not at all Absolutely

Comment

---

2. As the time for our work together comes to a close -

☐ I was disappointed that it was ending.

☐ I participated only because I felt I should.

☐ I felt relieved that it was almost over.

☐ I

---

3. Based on the tasks and expectations of the project the program specialist most think I'm

☐ an intelligent adult.

☐ a school child.

☐ a program specialist myself.

☐

---

4. How have you used the written materials?
(Check as many boxes as you wish)

☐ in thinking about my role in stimulating language.

☐ in planning for the improvement of the language.

☐ in planning for the improvement of the language environment in my classroom.

☐ as interesting reading at odd moments.

☐ to add to my projessional library.

☐ to contribute to the book drive.

☐

5. Place a checkmark (✓) next to the three aspects of this project you found the most important.

___ Its practicality.
___ The emphasis on "being free to improve."
___ Learning about my own responsibility for using problem solving skills to overcome difficulties.
___ The information on communication techniques.
___ What I learned about language development.
___ The information about adult verbalization.
___ The information on language and learning.
___ How to enrich the classroom experiences.
___ The feedback, support and encouragement.

---

6. Overall, how would you rate the project?
Circle one.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Poor				Good					Excellent

---

7. Has participation in this project made you more aware of other program improvements you might make, e.g. - more planning, better use of observations of children, more collaboration with staff.

Circle one: Yes No

Comments:

---

8. Have you improved any of your methods or procedures as a result of being involved in this project:

Circle one: Yes No

Comments:

---

9. If so, do you think you generally feel more confident of enhancing children's langauge learning as a result of this project?

Circle one: Yes No

Comments:

---

10. Do you think you've become a more accomplished teacher as a result of gaining more knowledge and new skills?
Circle one: Yes No

Comments:

---

11. Other comments:

APPENDIX J

Observation and Recording Form

Group Leader_____ Analysis -
Center_____ Date_____
Observer_____
Setting:

Verbal Functionals

Time:	Social	Representative	Expressive	Control	Comments

APPENDIX K

Summary Record of Conversations with Children

Group Leader _____ Center _____

Date	Context	Name Children/Adults Involved	Initiated by	Topic(s)	Turns	Remarks

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PITTSBURGH, PA. 15213

ADMINISTRATION BUILDING
BELLEFIELD AND FORBES AVENUES

Division of Early Childhood
Spring Hill Education Center
1351 Damas Street
Pittsburgh, Pa. 15212

June 12, 1989

Ms. A. S. Bayer
c/o Journal of Research and
Development in Education
College of Education
University of Georgia
Athens, Georgia 30602

Dear Ms. Bayer:

I am a doctoral student at Nova University in the field of early childhood and middle childhood.

I am writing to ask permission to use the "Concept Development Continum" which appeared in your article "A case study: Teachers learning and language."

I would like to adapt it to measure the growth of caregivers' understanding of language terms as part of a practicum designed to improve the language environment of day care classrooms through augmenting the interaction skills of the caregivers.

Sincerely,

Eleanor C. Barry

Eleanor C. Barry
Supervisory Program Specialist

ECB/ar

6/30/89

You are hereby granted permission to use the above mentioned article from the Journal of Research and Development in Education. Please see that full acknowledgement is given to the author and the Journal.

Best wishes,

A Guy Larkins

A. Guy Larkins
Editor
JOURNAL OF RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT IN EDUCATION

309 Clearview Lane
Massapequa, NY 11758
July 25, 1989

Ms. Eleanor C. Barry
Supervisory Program Specialist
Division of Early Childhood
Spring Hill Education Center
1351 Damas Street
Pittsburgh, PA 15212

Dear Ms. Barry:

Thank you for your letter of June 12.

I would be pleased to grant you permission to use "A Conversational Inventory" from my book Talk With Your Child.

Sincerely,

Harvey S. Wiener

HSW:ds

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PITTSBURGH, PA. 15213

ADMINISTRATION BUILDING
BELLEFIELD AND FORBES AVENUES

Division of Early Childhood
Spring Hill Education Center
1351 Damas Street
Pittsburgh, Pa. 15212

June 12, 1989

Roxanne Kapitan
Nutri Work
290 South Main Street
Andover, MA 01810

Dear Ms. Kapitan:

I am a student at Nova University completing my studies in Early Childhood and Middle Childhood for a Doctor of Education degree. As part of the requirement for earning the degree is the design and implementation of a practicum. The working title of my practicum is "Improving the Language Environment of Day Care Classrooms."

I am writing to ask permission to use the Nutrition and Human Performance Participant Evaluation which was a hand-out at the conference of the Pennsylvania Dietetic Association held in Pittsburgh, May 4th, 5th, 6th. My colleague, the nutritionist for Head Start, who attended the conference, told me your presentation was the highlight of the conference, and she generously shared the materials with me.

The evaluation form, of course, would have to be adapted to meet my needs in evaluating the degree of participants' growth in the ability to foster the language development of preschool children, but complete attribution will be given.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,
Eleanor C. Barry

Eleanor C. Barry
Supervisory Program Specialist

ECB/ar

Dear Ms Barry:
permission granted.
Roxanne Kapitan
Roxanne Kapitan
6-21-89